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BY GEORGE HORNE, D. D.

LATE BISHOP OF NORWICH,

AND

PRESIDENT OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

VOLUME THE THIRD.

OXFORD:

PRINTED FOR J. COOKE;

AND G. G. AND J. ROBINSON, T. CADELL, AND

F. AND C. RIVINGTON, LONDON.

M. DCC. XCIV.

3

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DISCOURSE I.

THE DUTY OF TAKING NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW.

MATTHEW VI. 34.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow ſhall take thought for the things of itſelf; ſufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

WHAT? Take no thought, no thought at all for the morrow? Attend only to the day that is paſſing over us, and make no proviſion for the future? Are we not to look forward; to ſuppoſe a continuation of life, and a want of the means which are neceſſary to ſupport it? Should we ſit ſtill, with our arms folded, and expect that Providence will ſupply us with thoſe means, without uſing our own

DISC. I. endeavours? Is not the huſbandman, when he has reaped one harveſt, to ſow his ſeed for another? Moſt undoubtedly he is. The Scriptures ſuppoſe all men to have ſome occupation, and to be labouring in it, that the ſtate of the world may be upholden. They tell us, in the Old Teſtament, that "the hand of the diligent maketh rich;" and in the New, that "if any man will not "work, neither ſhould he eat." In the former, man is ſent to learn wiſdom of "the "ant, which provideth her meat in the "ſummer, and gathereth her food in the "harveſt," with a view to the approaching winter; in the latter we read, that "the "parents ſhould lay up for the children." In a word, no one thing is more ſeverely condemned and expoſed, than the folly of the ſluggard, who has the preſumption to tempt God, by imagining, that all the bleſſings of heaven will deſcend on the head of idleneſs, and that meat will drop into his mouth, if he does but condeſcend to open it.—How are theſe very different directions to be reconciled?

The

DISC. I.

The truth is, that the Greek word, here rendered *take no thought*, ſignifies properly, be not *anxious*, *ſolicitous*, *miſerable*, about to morrow; literally and ſtrictly, be not of a *doubtful*, *divided mind*. For all care ſuppoſes a perſon to be wavering, drawn hither and thither by different motives, firſt one way and then another, not knowing how to fix and determine; ſince, when this is once firmly and finally done, the trouble ceaſes, and the man is at eaſe. Before that, the mind is *diſtracted*, that is, drawn diverſe ways at the ſame time, like the body of a criminal, in ſome countries, torn in pieces by horſes pulling in oppoſition to each other. They who have felt the torment of ſuch a ſtate of mind know what I mean, and what is ſo beautifully expreſſed by the original word in this place of Scripture, which thus kindly commands us not to make ourſelves wretched by anxious carings and apprehenſions about the future; but, in all caſes of difficulty, to perform diligently that part which appears wiſeſt and beſt for us to perform; then to reſign the matter into the

DISC. I. hands of God; quietly and patiently waiting the event, before it comes, and humbly acquiescing in it, when it does come. In short, so to use our endeavours, as if they were to effect every thing; so to trust in God, as if they were to effect nothing.

But let us not be too hasty in blaming our worthy translators. They could not have been ignorant, any more than we are, that it was impossible for Christ to give such a precept as at first sight this appears now to be. But they wrote above 150 years ago; and there is good reason for supposing, that the expression to *take thought*, did at that time generally denote the very thing, which, as has been shewn you, the Greek word most certainly means, *viz. to take anxious thought*, or *to be anxiously careful*, to be *uneasy*.

In this sense, which is the only true sense, "take no thought for the morrow," is excellent advice; and advice which is much needed. All things are full of labour.

Walk

Walk the ſtreets of a large city, or travel the roads that lead to one, and you will ſoon be convinced of it. But the continual hurry and buſtle, the inceſſant rolling and agitation without us, are nothing, if compared to thoſe within us. Whatever appearances men may put on, or however they may affect to diſguiſe the matter, the world of minds is a very uneaſy and reſtleſs world; and could it be fully and fairly diſcloſed to view, we ſhould behold it, like another ocean, in ſome parts all ſtorm and tempeſt; in others, ever ebbing and flowing; in no part, perfectly at reſt. He who once, by the word of his power, calmed the winds, and laid the waves, when all was uproar and confuſion among them, has ſpoken peace likewiſe to *this* troubled ſea, in the diſcourſe of which my text is the concluſion. Let us go over it together, and weigh well the reaſons given by our Saviour, why man ſhould ceaſe to be anxious, and permit God to govern, in his own way, the world which he himſelf has made. DISC. I.

As anxiety proceeds from a *divided* ſtate

DISC. II. of mind, our Lord first speaks to that point, and strikes at the root of the disorder. "No "man can serve two masters."—The commands which they lay upon him will often be contrary to each other. Both cannot be obeyed; and while the man hesitates which to obey, sometimes inclining to one, sometimes to the other, he must needs be unhappy. Would you then enjoy peace and quietness within? Serve one master, and let that master be God. Do your duty, and trust him for the event. The wise son of Sirach is very bold upon this subject, and appeals to universal experience: "Look at the generations of "old, and see; did ever any trust in the "Lord, and was confounded?" But why then are so many confounded? Because so few, so very few do really trust in God, when the hour of trial comes. They have recourse to the enemy for expedients; they follow the directions and maxims of the world; they sell themselves to another master, and provoke God to forsake them. The reproof of the prophet Elijah comes home to us all, and admits of no reply—

"Why

"Why halt ye between two opinions? If "the Lord be God, follow him. But if "Baal, then follow him." Only be conſiſtent; let profeſſion and practice go together. It is the want of this conſiſtency which expoſes religion to the ſcoff of thoſe who hate it, and does it more hurt than all the books that ever were written againſt it; as the examples of thoſe, who, in deſpite of temptations, hold them faſt by God, and continue ſtedfaſt unto the end, do it, perhaps, more good than all the books that ever were written *for* it. Of this, however, reſt aſſured, that, try as long as you will, and be as cunning as you pleaſe, "you cannot "ſerve God and mammon." DISC. I.

"Therefore (continues Chriſt) I ſay unto "you, be not anxious for your life, what ye "ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; nor yet "for your body, what ye ſhall put on." An unreaſonable anxiety and ſolicitude about the things of the world, even *food* and *raiment*, the *neceſſaries* of life, is plainly deemed by our Lord to be a "ſerving of

DISC. I. "mammon." He who is ſo intent even on the means of ſubſiſtence, as to loſe all the ſatisfaction of it, has but little faith. He is, in effect, an unbeliever. On the other hand, to rely ſo much upon Providence, as to do nothing at all, is to tempt God. But to labour without placing our truſt and confidence in our labour, expecting all from the bleſſing of God; this is to obey him, to work with his Providence, to ſet the ſprings of it a going, and to imitate Chriſt and the ſaints by a ſedate care, and an induſtrious confidence. He whoſe mind, through the influence of religion upon it, is calm and reſigned, will always exert his diligence to the beſt advantage. Fretfulneſs and impatience not only do not aſſiſt, but they hinder. A perſon in this ſtate has not the uſe of his powers and faculties, which he otherwiſe would have; beſides that the Holy Spirit of God flies from ſuch a temper, delighting to dwell in a meek, quiet, and contented heart.—But perhaps you have not things as you could wiſh to have them, through ſome fault, or miſmanagement of your own;

and

and it is this which troubles you. You have made ſome falſe ſtep. Nothing more probable. We all make many. The famous Marſhal Turenne, who was a good man, as well as a great general, uſed to ſay, he was not more obliged to any of his friends, than to one who had given him, at his firſt ſetting out in life, the following piece of advice: "When you have made a falſe ſtep, "ſpend not a moment in vexing yourſelf, "and moaning over it; but conſider how it "may beſt be repaired, and inſtantly ſet "about it[a]."

Chriſt, in his divine diſcourſe, lays down ſeveral reaſons, why men ſhould not diſquiet

[a] "The mountainous nature of this country (the Pays "de Vaud) ſubjects it to frequent torrents, which, when "violent, ſweep away vines, ſoil, and walls, in one common "deſtruction. The inhabitants behold the havoc with a "ſteady concern, and, without giving way to the clamorous "rage of the French, or ſinking into the gloomy deſpair "of the Engliſh, think only of the moſt effectual means of "repairing the loſs.—As ſoon as the ſtorm has abated, they "begin, with admirable patience and perſeverance, to re-"build the walls, to carry freſh earth on hurdles to the top "of the mountain, and to ſpread a new ſoil wherever the "old has been waſhed away." MOORE's View of Society and Manners in France, Swiſſerland, &c. I. 313.

them-

DISC. I. themſelves about the wants of life, or concerning the future; but, having done their part, ſhould repoſe themſelves, in full confidence, on the goodneſs of God.

The firſt reaſon is the experience of greater benefits already received. "Is not the life "more than meat, and the body than rai- "ment?" You are uneaſy, leſt you ſhould want proper food to ſupport life, and proper raiment to clothe the body. Life and the body are certainly greater gifts than food and raiment. Who gave you *them?* God gave them; and gave them of his own will, before you could be in a capacity to aſk them. Will not he, who gave the greater, give the leſs? Will not he, who gave life and the body, take care they ſhall be ſupported and clothed? Will he, who gave what you could not aſk, withhold what you can and do aſk at his hands? It is ingratitude to diſtruſt your beſt benefactor. Conſider likewiſe, under this head, the proofs you have had of God's kindneſs in providing for you hitherto; look back on your paſt life, and mark the

the bleſſings, of various kinds, that have diſtinguiſhed the ſeveral parts of it; the difficulties you have ſurmounted, the dangers you have eſcaped, and the favourable circumſtances and connections into which you have been led. Why ſhould you apprehend, that he, who has been with you all your life long, ſhould now be with you no longer? Recollect the promiſe, "I will never leave "thee, nor forſake thee." Above all things, forget not that greateſt and moſt ſtupendous of mercies, that beſt and unſpeakable gift of God, and the unanſwerable argument formed upon the conſideration of it by the Apoſtle; "He who ſpared not his own Son, "but gave him up for us all, how ſhall he "not with him alſo freely give us all "things?"—Reflect on this, and "be not "faithleſs, but believing." DISC. I.

The ſecond reaſon alledged by Chriſt, is the example of the leſſer animals, which the Providence of God feeds, without their own labour. "Behold the fowls of the "air; for they ſow not, neither do they "reap,

DISC. I. "reap, nor gather into barns; yet your "heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye "not much better than they?"

The little innocent inhabitants of the air, which are continually flying around us, were not created only for the uſe of the body of man. They ſerve higher and nobler ends. They often read lectures, to which the greateſt philoſopher might attend, and be the better for them, if he would conſider and apply them aright. When therefore you behold one of theſe choriſters of heaven ſinging upon a naked buſh, amidſt the darkneſs and deſolation of winter, might you not addreſs it in ſome ſuch manner as the following?—"Sweet bird, how cheer-"fully doſt thou ſit and ſing; and yet "knoweſt not where thou art, nor where "thou ſhalt make thy next meal, and at "night muſt ſhroud thyſelf in this ſame "buſh for a lodging, while the winds ſhall "howl through it, and thy feathers ſhall "be wet with the rain, or covered with "the ſnow! How ought I to bluſh, who

"ſee

" ſee before me ſuch liberal proviſions of DISC. I.
" my God, and find myſelf ſitting warm
" under my own roof, yet am ready to droop
" through a diſtruſtful and unthankful dul-
" neſs! Had I ſo little certainty of my
" ſupport and ſhelter, how anxious and
" heartleſs ſhould I be; how little diſpoſed
" to make muſic for thee or myſelf! Surely
" thou cameſt not hither without a Provi-
" dence; God ſent thee not ſo much to de-
" light, as to ſhame me out of my ſullen
" unbelief, who, under far more apparent
" means of maintenance and protection, am
" leſs cheerful and confident. Reaſon and
" faith, alas, alas! have not yet done for me,
" what mere inſtinct does for thee; and
" want of foreſight makes thee more merry,
" if not more happy here, than the fore-
" ſight of better things maketh me. Cer-
" tainly, thy providence, O God, is not im-
" paired by thoſe ſuperior powers thou haſt
" given me; let not my greater helps hin-
" der me from poſſeſſing an holy ſecu-
" rity, and comfortable reliance on thee. I
" never knew an earthly father take care of
" his fowls, and neglect his children; and

" ſhall

DISC. I. "shall I suspect this of my heavenly father? "That man is unworthy to have God for "his father in heaven, who depends less "upon his goodness, wisdom, and power, "than upon a crop of corn, which may be "spoiled either in the field, or the barn [b]."

But forcibly as these little animals teach, the parts of inanimate nature are by no means behind hand with them. Walk into a flower-garden, and see with what beautiful garments God has invested the perishable grass, which to-day is, and to-morrow withers away. Above the rest, look at the lovely white of the lily, pure and spotless as it's parent, the light of heaven. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like it. It resembles a greater than Solomon, whose face did shine as the sun, and whose raiment was white as the light, so as no fuller on earth, no effort of human skill and labour, could whiten it. From a flower of the field, then—from a flower of a moment's duration, man, who is made for

[b] See Bp. HALL's Occasional Meditations, No. xiv. and QUESNELL *in loc.*

heaven

heaven and eternity, may learn how low the care of Providence vouchſafes to ſtoop. And ſhall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Shall he not protect and adorn his choſen people, the plants of his own hand, the flowers of his own paradiſe? Yes, verily, believe in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs. The light of his countenance ſhall ſhine, the dew of his celeſtial benediction ſhall deſcend upon you, enabling you to grow up and flouriſh, to reflect glory on your Maker, and to cheer the hearts of men. And although your appointed time on earth be ſhort, and you likewiſe muſt fade away, and return to duſt; yet even from that duſt can the ſame influences call you forth, to be clothed with honour and immortality, to enjoy a perpetual ſpring, and bloom for ever in unfading beauty. Such are the leſſons of confidence in God's mercy, and reſignation to his will, which meet us every time we take a walk in a garden. DISC. I.

Another reaſon urged by our Saviour againſt indulging that wretched care which has fretted ſo many hearts in pieces, is it's fruitleſſneſs.

DISC. I. leſſneſs. When we have been uneaſy for half a century, what has it availed us? Nothing. It is not in our power to add a day to our lives, or a foot to our ſtature. Which of you, by being anxious and careful overmuch, can add one cubit to his ſtature? By taking contentedly and cheerfully our portion of food, the body attains in due time to that ſize and height which God has appointed, and laſts as long as he intends it ſhould. Fretfulneſs and impatience may diminiſh ſomething, but can add nothing. To what purpoſe, then, ſerves anxiety? If it cannot do the leſs, it certainly cannot do the greater. Uneaſineſs and diſtruſt render us unworthy of that bleſſing, without which all our labour is in vain. And no wonder they ſhould do ſo. He who *diſtruſts* a friend, is very near *forſaking* him; and a man is not far from murmuring againſt Providence, when he is diſſatisfied with it's conduct. This is ſo very dangerous a temper of mind, that we ſhould always be on our guard againſt falling into it, as many are apt to do, upon ſlight and common occaſions, merely for want of conſideration.

If

If we acknowlege a God who governs the world, let us not diſtruſt him, or find fault with his government, but repent, tremble, and adore. DISC. I.

To do otherwiſe, is, in effect, to renounce our religion, and return to *heatheniſm*. It is our Lord's own obſervation. "Therefore "be not anxiouſly thoughtful, ſaying, What "ſhall we eat, or what ſhall we drink, or "wherewithal ſhall we be clothed? for after "all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek." They employ their whole care in ſeeking them. And why? Becauſe they either believe there is no God, or, if there be, that he does not concern himſelf with the affairs of the world. In either caſe, men are left to themſelves, and have no one elſe on whom to depend. With believers the caſe is different. "Your heavenly Father (ſays Chriſt to his "diſciples) knoweth that ye have need of "all theſe things." There cannot be a more expreſſive and affecting image. A child, who has a father in being, can only wiſh that his neceſſities ſhould be made known

DISC. I. to that father; becauſe, when once known, he is certain they will be ſupplied. But from *our* Father no ſecrets are hidden. His wiſdom is equal to his goodneſs, and his power equal to both. When therefore we have uſed our own endeavours, as he has directed us to do, we may, with the confidence of children, "caſt all our care upon "him; ſince," without doubt, "he careth "for us." The misfortune is, that, amongſt all our cares, we care little for him, and think little of him, unleſs when the attention is rouſed by a clap of thunder, or ſome extraordinary event, which affects us, for the time, as that does. We have only a diſtant, uncertain notion of him floating in our minds. We do not conſider him as preſent round about us, and, what is more, preſent within us, and perfectly acquainted with all that is paſſing in the inmoſt chamber of the heart. We neglect him, and therefore he ſeems to neglect us—I ſay, he *ſeems* to neglect us; for that very ſeeming neglect is graciouſly intended to humble, and reform, and bring us to a better mind, that we may become

become objects of his favour, and partake of his bleſſings. DISC. I.

This is our Lord's next argument. "Seek ye firſt the kingdom of God, and "his righteouſneſs, and all theſe things "ſhall be added unto you." Chriſt does not mean to ſay, that if a man will become religious, he will immediately give him wealth. Certainly not: ſince if the party in queſtion were ever ſo good a man, that might be the moſt effectual way in the world to make him a bad man. He might have ſomething lurking in his conſtitution either of body or mind, which would render him incapable of reſiſting the temptations of a large fortune; and He, who knows all things, knows this would be the caſe. Numberleſs are the perſons, to whoſe happineſs ſuch an eſtate would not add a ſingle grain, but quite the reverſe; and the greateſt kindneſs that can be ſhewed them is to keep it out of their way, though you will never perſuade them to think ſo. But thus much the promiſe implies, that to him who firſt

DISC. I. and principally ſeeks, as he ought to do, the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, and is not wanting to himſelf, ſhall be added food and raiment, and ſuch other things as are convenient and proper for him, ſuch things as are really and truly, all circumſtances conſidered, beſt for him upon the whole, and will hereafter appear to have been ſo.—But is not wealth then a bleſſing? To thoſe who can manage and employ it to the glory of God, and the good of mankind, it is a bleſſing, for this reaſon, becauſe "it is "more bleſſed to give, than to receive:" but the number of theſe is ſmall, very ſmall indeed. If religion therefore does not give a man wealth, it does not give him that, which is much more likely, at the long run, to prejudice, than to benefit him. If religion does not give a man wealth, it makes him happy without it; if it does not enable him to have what he likes, it enables him to like what he has. And, as an Apoſtle obſerves, "the time is ſhort; this preſent "ſcene of things will ſoon be changed; it "remains therefore that he who has an eſtate

"be

"be (towards God) as if he had none;" which is much the harder taſk of the two. DISC. I.

Since, then, the promiſe of worldly neceſſaries and comforts is made on the condition of ſeeking firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, let him, who thinks he has not his ſhare of good things in this life, retire into his cloſet for half an hour, and aſk himſelf a few queſtions; as—Have I ever really and in earneſt ſought the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs? Do I ſo much as know what they are? or have I taken any pains to enquire? If I have enquired, and underſtood their nature, do I not rather ſeek after any thing, than after them? Is not either buſineſs, or pleaſure, or even idleneſs itſelf, that moſt irkſome and tormenting of ſtates, preferred before them? Do I give one hour, out of the four and twenty, to the contemplation of them? Have I entered into the kingdom of God? or rather, has the kingdom of God entered into me? Is it within me, and does it manifeſt itſelf without me? Does Chriſt rule

DISC. I. in my heart by faith? and do my appetites and paſſions move in obedience to that heavenly principle? Do I love God, and delight in prayer and praiſe? Do I love my neighbour, and rejoice to aſſiſt and benefit him, to cover his faults, and overlook his infirmities? Are thoſe tempers alive and reigning in me, which Chriſt has pronounced *bleſſed?* and, in the general and common courſe of my thoughts, words, and actions, do I conſider myſelf as in his preſence, to whom I muſt give account? The anſwers returned by conſcience to ſuch queſtions as theſe, would perhaps ſhew the beſt man living, that if he have not all he wanted, there is no juſt reaſon for complaint. Three is another conſideration which may completely ſettle your minds, on the ſubject of the diſtreſſes to which the righteous are ſometimes ſubject in this preſent life. A very good man may be rendered much better by trials and afflictions. Proportionable to his ſufferings will be his reward; and if you could propoſe the queſtion to thoſe ſaints in heaven, who once wandered, deſtitute, afflicted,

afflicted, tormented, in ſheep-ſkins and goat-ſkins, upon earth, they would tell you, they do not now wiſh to have done otherwiſe. DISC. II.

Our Lord cloſes his intereſting and divine diſcourſe on this ſubject of worldly care and anxiety, in the words of my text, with an argument drawn from the evident abſurdity of anticipating ſorrow, and rendering ourſelves unhappy beforehand. "Be not there-"fore careful for the morrow; for the "morrow will be careful for the things of "itſelf; ſufficient unto the day is the evil "thereof." The meaning is, that, having ſuch a promiſe from our heavenly Father, of being provided for as his children, if we are but dutiful children, we ſhould not render ourſelves miſerable by foreſtalling miſchief, and adding the future to the preſent; but that, having, through his grace, tranſacted the buſineſs, and overcome the difficulties of the day, we ſhould at night diſburthen our minds of ſolicitude, and reſt our weary heads upon our pillows in peace; ſince the

DISC. 1. trouble of each day is ſufficient for the day; and He, who has been with us to-day, will be with us to-morrow.

In this ever memorable and moſt important precept, Chriſt conſults our natural quiet, no leſs than our ſpiritual welfare. The chief ſources of uneaſineſs are, vexation at what is *paſt*, or forebodings of what is *to come*: whereas what is *paſt* ought to give us no diſquiet, except that of repentance for our faults; and what is *to come* ought much leſs to affect us, becauſe, with regard to us and our concerns, it is not, and perhaps never will be. The *preſent* is what we are apt to neglect. That, well employed, will render the remembrance of the *paſt* pleaſant, and the proſpect of the *future* comfortable. Attention to the duties of the day is like the manna, when it deſcended freſh and grateful from above; anxiety about the events of to-morrow reſembles the ſame manna, when, diſtruſtfully laid up contrary to the divine command, it bred worms and putrified. Give us, then, bleſſed Lord,

even

even as thou haſt commanded us to aſk at thy hands, our *daily* bread, and let it not be corrupted by diſcontented and unthankful imaginations. Thou art the ſame, yeſterday, to-day, and for ever. Thou haſt borne us from the womb, thou haſt ſupported us from our youth up, even until now. Thou forſakeſt none but thoſe who have firſt forſaken thee. Only enable us to truſt in thee, and then we ſhall never be confounded. DISC. I.

DISCOURSE II.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

2 COR. V. 17.

Old things are paſſed away; behold, all things are become new.

THE departure of the old year, and the entrance of a new one, cannot but ſuggeſt many uſeful and very important reflections to a thinking man. I will beg leave to offer ſome few to your minds, exactly as they have ariſen in mine.

The departure of the old year may, I think, fitly be compared to the death of an old friend; and our behaviour in one caſe regulated by that which generally obtains in the other.

1. When

DISC. II.

1. When we have loſt a friend, our firſt care naturally is, to ſee that he be decently interred; to follow him, mourning, to the grave; to let his funeral remind us of our own; and to erect a monument to his memory.

The paſt year is, to all intents and purpoſes, loſt to us, and numbered among the dead. It is gone to join the multitude of years that have died before it. They ariſe from their ſeats in the repoſitories of the dead, to receive it among them; it is now become like one of them; and all that hurry and buſtle of buſineſs and pleaſure, which diſtinguiſhed and animated it, have ſunk into ſilence and oblivion. It will return no more upon the earth, and the ſcenes that were acted in it are cloſed for ever. It has lived, however, and we have enjoyed it; let us pay it the honours due to the deceaſed, and drop a tear over it's tomb. We cannot take a final leave of any thing, to which we have been accuſtomed, without a ſentiment of concern. Objects, otherwiſe of the moſt

moſt indifferent nature, claim this, and they never fail of obtaining it, at the hour of parting. The idea of the *laſt* is always a melancholy idea; and it is ſo, perhaps, for this among other reaſons, becauſe, whatever be the immediate ſubject, an application is preſently made to ourſelves. Thus, in the caſe before us, it is recollected—and let it be recollected—it is good for us to recollect it—that what has happened to the year, muſt happen to us. On each of us a day muſt dawn, which is to be our laſt. When we ſhall have buried a few more years, we muſt ourſelves be buried; our friends ſhall weep at our funeral; and what we have been, and what we have done, will live only in their remembrance. The reflection is ſorrowful; but it is juſt, and ſalutary; equally vain and imprudent would be the thought of putting it away from us. Meanwhile, let us caſt our eyes back on that portion of time which is come to it's concluſion, and ſee whether the good thoughts that have occurred to our minds, the good words that have been uttered, and the good deeds that have

DISC. II. have been performed by us, will not furniſh materials, with which we may erect a laſting monument to the memory of the departed year.

2. When a friend is dead and buried, we take a penſive kind of pleaſure in going over again and again the hours we formerly paſſed with him, either in proſperity, or adverſity. Let us purſue the ſame courſe; it may be done to great advantage, in this inſtance. The grand ſecret of a religious life is, to "ſet God always before us;" to live under a conſtant ſenſe of his Providence; to obſerve and ſtudy his diſpenſations towards us, that they may produce their proper effects, and draw forth ſuitable returns from us. Too often we ſuffer them to glide unheeded by us, and never afterwards think of recalling them to conſideration! It were well if we kept a diary of our lives, for this purpoſe, if we "ſo numbered our *days*, "that we might apply our hearts unto wiſ-"dom." But certainly, no *year* ſhould be permitted to expire, without giving occaſion

to

to a retroſpect. The principal events that have befallen us in it ſhould be recollected, and the requiſite improvements be raiſed from them ſeverally, by meditation. What preſervations from dangers ſpiritual or temporal have been vouchſafed; what new bleſſings granted, or old ones continued, to me and mine; to my friends, my neighbours, my church, my country; and how have I expreſſed, in word and in deed, my gratitude and thankfulneſs for them? With what loſſes, or croſſes, what calamities, or ſickneſſes, have we been viſited; and have ſuch viſitations rendered us more penitent, more diligent, devout, and holy, more humble, and more charitable? If the light of heaven hath ſhined on our tabernacle, and we have enjoyed the hours in health and happineſs, let us enjoy them over again in the remembrance: if we have lived under a dark and ſtormy ſky, and affliction has been our lot, let us conſider that ſo much of that affliction is gone, and the leſs there is of it to come. But whatever may be gone, or to come, all is from God, who ſends it not

DISC. II. not without a reaſon, and with whom if we cooperate, no event can befal us, which will not in the end turn to our advantage. Such reflections as theſe ſhould indeed be always made at the time when the events do befal us. But if not made then, they ſhould be made at ſome time; which yet will not be done, unleſs ſome time be appointed for making them. And what time ſo fit, as that, when one year ends, and another begins; when, having finiſhed a ſtage of our journey, we ſurvey, as from an eminence, the ground we have paſſed; and the ſight of the objects brings to mind the occurrences upon that part of the road?

3. When a friend is taken from us, we begin to conſider, whether we profited by him, as we ought, while he was with us; whether we ſufficiently obſerved his good example, to imitate it; his wholeſome advice, to follow it; his faithful and kind reproofs, to be the better for them, by amending our faults. In the courſe of the foregoing year, many good examples muſt we

have

have ſeen and heard of; and by means of books and converſation from without, and hints from our own conſciences within, much wholeſome advice, many faithful and kind reproofs, muſt we have met with. For all theſe admonitions are we the better, and have we profited by them? Let it be ſuppoſed, for inſtance, that we had been accuſtomed aforetime to pray but ſeldom, and when we did, to pray without attention, and without fruit: Do we now obſerve the hours of prayer with more conſtancy, and leſs diſtraction? Do we really and truly find any pleaſure in our devotions? or are we dragged unwillingly to them as a taſk, and, conſequently, rejoice with all our hearts when they are over? For years together, perhaps, we have turned our backs on the communion Table: is it in our intention to give that holy ordinance a more frequent attendance for the future? Do we hear a ſermon with a determined reſolution to carry what is ſaid into practice, or as a matter of amuſement only, and a ſubject whereon to diſplay our powers of criticiſm? Does the DISC. II.

DISC. II. current of our thoughts flow in any degree more pure than formerly? Is our converſation become innocent, at leaſt, if not improving; free from ſlander and ſcandal, from pride and conceit? Are our actions more and more directed by the rules of juſtice and charity? Above all, what uſe do we make of the talents with which it hath pleaſed God to entruſt us, particularly thoſe two, our *time*, and our *fortunes*? Is it altogether ſuch, as that we ſhall be able, on our death-beds, to think on it, before God, with comfort and confidence? When we examine ourſelves as to the progreſs we have made in the Chriſtian life ſince this day twelvemonth, do we find that we have made any progreſs at all, that we have diſcarded any evil habits, or acquired any good ones; that we have mortified any vices, or brought forward to perfection any virtues? In one word, as we grow older, do we grow wiſer and better? Theſe are the queſtions which ſhould be aſked, at the concluſion of a year—And may the heart of every perſon here preſent return to them an anſwer of peace!

4. While

4. While we are following a friend to his grave, it is obvious to reflect, that His day of trial is at an end, that the time allotted him for his probation is over, and his condition fixed for eternity. Engaged in the awful ſpeculation, we can hardly avoid the following reflection; if, inſtead of his being taken from us, we had been taken from him, what, at this time, had been our lot and portion in the other world?—By the favour of God, we have lived to the end of the year: we might have died before it. In ſuch caſe, where had we now been? Have we no miſgivings within? Do we feel as if we thought that all would have been right? Are we conſcious to ourſelves of having ſtood prepared, at all times, and for all events, in ſuch habits of repentance, faith, and charity, as would have rendered our paſſage hence welcome and proſperous? If not, ſhould we delay for a moment to make ſuch preparation, and to ſtand in ſuch habits?—Suppoſe any perſon had means of being aſſured, and actually were aſſured, that he ſhould die upon the laſt day of the year into which he is now entered; DISC. II.

DISC. II.

tered; we ſhould all agree upon the manner in which ſuch perſon ought to ſpend the year. There would not be, I dare ſay, one diſſentient voice. Yet, upon the ſuppoſition here made, this perſon has before him a whole year certain. Is not the obligation then ſtill ſtronger upon every one of us? For that man muſt be out of his ſenſes, who can bring himſelf to imagine, that *he* has a whole year certain, or a month, or a day, or an hour.—The argument is not to be anſwered.

I have ſomewhere read of one, who, having ſtrong religious impreſſions, and feeling terrible apprehenſions whenever the ideas of death and judgment preſented themſelves, contrived ſo to habituate his mind to the contemplation of them, as to render them, ever after, not only eaſy, but agreeable. His cuſtom was, to conſider each evening as the cloſe of life, the darkneſs of the night as the time of death, and his bed as his grave. He compoſed himſelf for the one, therefore, as he would have done for the

the other. On retiring to reſt, he fell on his knees; confeſſed, and intreated pardon for, the tranſgreſſions of the day; renewed his faith in the mercies of God through Chriſt; expreſſed in a prayer of interceſſion his charity towards all mankind; and then committed his ſoul into the hands of his Creator and Redeemer, as one who was to awake no more in this world. His ſleep, after this, was perfectly ſweet; the days added to his life were eſtimated as clear gain; and when the laſt came, it ended with as much tranquillity as all that had preceded. I would wiſh to recommend this example to your imitation. The practice will coſt you ſome pains and trouble, perhaps, for a little while; but you will never have cauſe to repent that you beſtowed them; and I know of no better method whereby you can place yourſelves in a ſtate of conſtant ſecurity and comfort.

5. When we ſay, that we have loſt a friend, we can mean only, that we have loſt him for a time. He is not finally periſhed:

DISC. II. we ſhall ſee him again; and, therefore, it behoves us to conſider, what our ſenſations will be at the ſight of him; which muſt always depend on our uſage of him during his life. We ſhall ſee him with joy, or grief, as we have formerly uſed him well, or otherwiſe; and all that we have ever ſaid or done relative to him, will then be known. We are too apt to forget this circumſtance; and ſeem to think, that when they are dead with whom we have been concerned, no farther account will be taken of our behaviour towards them. Otherwiſe, the conſideration could not but have a great effect in the regulation of our conduct.

The caſe is exactly the ſame reſpecting the old year now departed. It is indeed, as we have obſerved before, numbered among the dead; but, like the dead, it will, in one ſenſe, ariſe, and appear to us again, and we ſhall be made to recollect the uſage it received at our hands, while we were in poſſeſſion of it upon earth. Memory will in that hour be quickened and perfected.

Like

Like a mirror holden before our eyes, it will repreſent faithfully to our minds the various tranſactions of the year, in which we bore a part; and we ſhall be forced to recognize and acknowlege the thoughts, the words, and the actions, which paſſed, during it's continuance with us. May we find pleaſure in reviewing them!—But review them we muſt—and ſo muſt He, who is to be our judge, at the day of his ſecond manifeſtation. That day draws on apace. For not only friends die, and years expire, and we ourſelves ſhall do the ſame, but the world itſelf approaches to it's end. It likewiſe muſt die. Once already has it ſuffered a watery death: it is to be deſtroyed a ſecond time by fire. A celebrated author, having in his writings followed it through all it's changes from the creation to the conſummation, deſcribes the eruption of this fire, and the progreſs it is to make, with the final and utter devaſtation to be effected by it, when all ſublunary nature ſhall be overwhelmed and ſunk in a molten deluge. In this ſituation of things, he ſtands over the

DISC. II.

DISC. II. world, as if he had been the only ſurvivor, and pronounces it's funeral oration in a ſtrain of ſublimity ſcarce ever equalled by mere man.

" Let us reflect, upon this occaſion, on " the vanity and tranſient glory of this ha- " bitable world. How, by the force of one " element breaking looſe upon the reſt, all " the varieties of nature, all the works of " art, all the labours of men, are reduced " to nothing. All that we admired and " adored before, as great and magnificent, " is obliterated, or vaniſhed; and another " form and face of things, plain, ſimple, " and every where the ſame, overſpreads " the whole earth. Where are now the " great empires of the world, and their im- " perial cities? their pillars, trophies, and " monuments of glory? Shew me where " they ſtood, read the inſcription, tell me " the conqueror's name. What remains, " what impreſſions, what difference or diſ- " tinction do you diſcern in the maſs of fire? " Rome itſelf, eternal Rome, the great city,

" the

" the empreſs of the world, whoſe domina- DISC.
" tion and ſuperſtition, ancient and modern, II.
" make a large part of the hiſtory of this
" earth; what is become of her now? She
" laid her foundations deep, and her palaces
" were ſtrong and ſumptuous; *ſhe glorified*
" *herſelf, and lived deliciouſly, and ſaid in her*
" *heart, I ſit as a queen, and ſhall ſee no ſor-*
" *row.* But her hour is come, ſhe is wiped
" away from the face of the earth, and
" buried in everlaſting oblivion. But not
" cities only, and the works of men's hands
" —the everlaſting hills, the mountains
" and rocks are melted as wax before the
" ſun, and their place is no where to be
" found. Here ſtood the Alps, the load of
" the earth, that covered many countries,
" and reached their arms from the Ocean to
" the Black Sea: this huge maſs of ſtone is
" ſoftened and diſſolved, as a tender cloud
" into rain. Here ſtood the African moun-
" tains, and Atlas with his top above the
" clouds; there was frozen Caucaſus, and
" Taurus, and Imaus, and the mountains
" of Aſia; and yonder, towards the north,
" ſtood

DISC. II.

" ſtood the Riphæan hills, clothed in ice
" and ſnow. All theſe are vaniſhed, dropped
" away as the ſnow upon their heads!—
" Great and marvellous are thy works,
" Lord God Almighty; juſt and true are
" thy ways, thou King of ſaints!"

Thus, you ſee, " Old things are paſſed " away." But out of their aſhes a new creation ſhall ſpring forth. According to the divine promiſe, which cannot fail, we look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwell righteouſneſs, joy, and life, and from which, conſequently, ſin, ſorrow, and death, are for ever excluded. We wait, in faith and patience, for the time, when we ourſelves ſhall be reſtored with the world, and " all things ſhall become new." To prepare for this glorious and long expected time, let us be firſt " renewed in the " ſpirit of our minds; let us put off the " old man, corrupt with the deceitful luſts; " and put on the new man, which of " God is created in righteouſneſs and true " holineſs;" addreſſing ourſelves, for the neceſſary

neceſſary ſtrength and power, to him that ſitteth on the throne, who ſaith from thence, "Behold, I make all things new." This done, we ſhall deſcend undiſmayed to the grave, and our fleſh ſhall reſt there in hope, like a grain of corn in it's furrow, to appear, in another and better form, at the appointed ſeaſon, to begin an everlaſting ſpring, and be for ever young. And when can we enter, with ſo great propriety, upon the bleſſed work, as now, when a new year affords us opportunity to repair the miſcarriages of the old one? —Let me leave in your ears, and upon your minds, the charming words of that kind and affectionate invitation made, in one of the ſacred books, by the Redeemer to his church, who, you know, throughout the Scriptures is conſidered in the relation of his ſpouſe— DISC. II.

"Lo, the winter will ſoon be paſt; the "rain will be over and gone; the flowers "will appear on the earth; the time of "the ſinging of birds will come; and the "voice of the turtle will be heard in our "land.

DISC. II. "land. The fig-tree will put forth her green "figs, and the vines, with the tender grape, "give a good ſmell.—Awake, thou that "ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and "Chriſt ſhall give thee light."

DISCOURSE III.

THE CHILDREN IN THE TEMPLE.

MATT. XXI. 15, 16.

And when the chief prieſts and ſcribes ſaw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and ſaying, Hoſanna to the Son of David; they were ſore diſpleaſed, and ſaid unto him, Heareſt thou what theſe ſay? And Jeſus ſaith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and ſucklings thou haſt perfected praiſe?

THIS part of ſacred ſtory preſents us with a very extraordinary ſcene. Meſſiah, the promiſed Saviour, prefigured by the law, foretold by the prophets, and univerſally expected to appear, appears accordingly. Exactly in the manner deſcribed by Zechariah, he makes his public entry, meek and lowly, into his capital city, Jeruſalem. Agreeably to the celebrated paſ-

ſages

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ſages in Malachi and Haggai, "The Lord, "whom men ſought, came to his temple," and by his perſonal preſence rendered "the "glory of the latter houſe greater than the "glory of the former." "He came to his "own, but his own received him not." The rulers of the then church would not acknowlege him: they were offended (it was but a natural conſequence) with thoſe who did ſo. The voices of children, proclaiming his titles, ſounded harſh and grating in their ears; and they hinted by their queſtion, that he himſelf ought to reprove, rebuke, and ſilence theſe little heralds of his praiſes. "Heareſt thou "what theſe ſay?"—as if they had ſpoken blaſphemy. But mark the anſwer: "Je-"ſus ſaith unto them, Yea; have ye never "read, Out of the mouth of babes and "ſucklings thou haſt perfected praiſe?" In other words, "You are ignorant of your "own Scriptures; at leaſt, you do not re-"collect what is written in the viii^th Pſalm; "that when God is to be glorified for his "works, and thoſe who ſhould do it will

"not

" not do it, he makes even children the in- DISC. III.
" ſtruments of ſhaming and confounding the
" adverſaries of his truth: *out of the mouths*
" *of babes and ſucklings* he *perfects praiſe*,
" or, as it is in the original Hebrew, *ordains*,
" *appoints, conſtitutes ſtrength, to ſtill the*
" *enemy and the avenger.*"

The propoſition ariſing from the text, is evidently this; that God is pleaſed to eſteem himſelf honoured, when children are taught to confeſs and to praiſe his holy name. A few conſiderations ſhall be offered, touching the grounds and reaſons of ſuch propoſition, whence an application will follow to the charity which this diſcourſe is deſigned to recommend.

On hearing, that " out of the mouths " of babes and ſucklings God ordains " ſtrength to ſtill the enemy," the thought which firſt ſtrikes us is that ſuggeſted in another paſſage of Scripture, wherein he ſays, " My ſtrength is made perfect in weak- " neſs." This is the circumſtance which diſtinguiſhes

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diſtinguiſhes the works of God from the works of man. When man has an end to accompliſh, he muſt employ means originally and in themſelves ſuited to that end. The materials and the perſons who uſe them muſt be every way proper, and equal to the work. By him who is building a houſe, great preparations are made, plentiful ſtores of every thing neceſſary laid in, ſkilful and able artificers provided: and we know beforehand, that, by a due application of the cauſes, the effect may be produced. In the works of God it is otherwiſe. Means unlikely and improbable are choſen, perſons weak and naturally unable ſelected, that the power may appear to be not in them, but in him. In this way he delights to ſhew forth his glory through the whole creation. At the beginning, light ſhone out of darkneſs, order out of confuſion, and all the beauty and fulneſs of the world which we behold aroſe from a chaos "without "form, and void." By a ſilent, unſeen, myſterious proceſs, the faireſt flower of the garden ſprings from a ſmall inſignificant ſeed,

ſeed, the majeſtic oak of the foreſt from an acorn, the ſtrongeſt and wiſeſt man from a wretched, helpleſs, and ſenſeleſs infant; the holy and exalted ſaint from a miſerable ſinner. A prophet with great juſtneſs and propriety ſtyles this, "the *hiding* of the di-"vine power." And thus, upon the ſame plan, when the Goſpel was to be preached, and the world ſaved, not a company of philoſophers, or an army of heroes, but a few illiterate Jewiſh fiſhermen were ſent forth, to accompliſh the mighty work. Hear with what force and energy St. Paul treats this point. "The fooliſhneſs of God is "wiſer than men; and the weakneſs of "God is ſtronger than men. For you ſee "your calling, how that not many wiſe "men after the fleſh, not many mighty, "not many noble are called. But God hath "choſen the fooliſh things of the world, to "confound the wiſe; and God hath choſen "the weak things of the world, to confound "the things which are mighty; and baſe "things of the world, and things which "are deſpiſed, hath God choſen, yea, and

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"things which are not, to bring to nought "things that are." Then follows the reaſon; "that no fleſh ſhould glory in his pre-"ſence." The caſe of the children in the temple confounding by their Hoſannas the pride and malignity of the enemies of Chriſt, was, therefore, by no means ſingle. It was upon the general ſcheme of the divine proceedings, as the power and ſkill of the artiſt are always proportionably manifeſted by the meanneſs and weakneſs of the inſtruments employed to effect his purpoſe.

But, *ſecondly*, God is ſtill farther honoured when children are taught to confeſs and proclaim his truths, becauſe hereby it is ſhewn, that his truths are ſuch as children may confeſs and proclaim. All may receive the ſaving doctrines of our religion, and learn it's wholeſome precepts. Over the door of the ſchool of the celebrated Plato, we are told, was written a ſentence, importing, that no one muſt preſume to enter there, who had not firſt ſtudied and rendered himſelf maſter of geometry. No ſuch requiſi-

tion

tion is made by our bleſſed Maſter of thoſe who mean to enter themſelves in the number of his ſcholars. In other reſpects learned or unlearned, wiſe or unwiſe, noble or ignoble, great or ſmall, young or old, come who will, and he ſhall be inſtructed in all things neceſſary for him to learn, in order to his ſalvation; in a day, in an hour, he ſhall know more than the ſages of antiquity were able to diſcover, from the diſperſion of the nations at Babel to the coming of Chriſt, or would have diſcovered, from thence to the conſummation of all things. This is a very wonderful conſideration; and we muſt dwell a little upon it, for the honour and praiſe of Revelation, and of that Being who vouchſafed it to man. DISC. III.

"In the beginning God created the "heavens and the earth." A child eaſily repeats and underſtands theſe few words of Moſes. But the child who does ſo is at once in poſſeſſion of a truth, which heathen philoſophy, for ages and generations, ſought in vain; none could then with any degree

DISC. III. of certainty determine, by whom the world was made; whether it were made at all; whether there were many Gods, or one.

If the world were made by a good and gracious God, whence came ſo much evil as we all ſee and know to be in it? Here the wiſdom of paganiſm was for ever at a ſtand. Bewildered and loſt in it's reaſonings and gueſſes upon the ſubject, it ſoon came to queſtion whether God were indeed good and gracious, or whether there could be any God who governed ſuch a world. Let theſe men liſten to a child, nurtured in the Chriſtian Scriptures. "By one man's diſobedience "ſin entered into the world, and death by "ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, "for that all have ſinned." What plainer or farther information can be deſired?

Mankind have always found themſelves tempted and carried on by their luſts and paſſions to offend God, by tranſgreſſing that law (whatever it might be) under which they lived. But who among them could

could tell the means by which they were to be reconciled to the offended Deity? Not one. Infinite were the devices and fancies of ſuperſtition to effect ſuch reconciliation; but all in vain. It muſt have been dropped, and "let alone for ever," by them; whereas, every child with us knows, that "Chriſt "has appeared to put away ſin by the ſa-"crifice of himſelf, and is become the "author of ſalvation to all who believe in "him, and walk according to that belief." DISC. III.

At a certain time, we die. Our bodies are laid in the earth, and moulder to duſt. And what is to befal them afterwards? Where is the wiſe man of the world that can give us inſtruction and aſſurance on this point? "Son of man, can theſe dry bones "live?"—is a queſtion not to be anſwered out of the Chriſtian ſchool. *In* that ſchool any child can anſwer it. "Now is Chriſt "riſen from the dead, and become the firſt "fruits of them that ſleep. For as by man "came death, by man came alſo the reſur-"rection of the dead. For as in Adam all

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" die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made " alive.—The hour is coming in which " all that are in their graves ſhall hear his " voice, and ſhall come forth; they that " have done good, to the reſurrection of life; " and they that have done evil, to the reſur- " rection of condemnation."—" Had Jeſus " Chriſt delivered no other declaration than " this laſt (ſays an excellent writer), he had " pronounced a meſſage of ineſtimable im- " portance, and well worthy of that ſplendid " apparatus of prophecy and miracles with " which his miſſion was introduced and " atteſted: a meſſage in which the wiſeſt " of mankind would rejoice to find an an- " ſwer to their doubts, and reſt to their en- " quiries." The obſervation is juſt and noble. And yet, ſuch a meſſage one of the heathen ſages, were he now living, might receive by the firſt child he met in the ſtreet.

In this manner, to ſilence falſe philoſophy and pretended wiſdom, has God " ordained " ſtrength out of the mouths of babes and " ſucklings," while by them are acknow-

leged

leged and proclaimed the moſt concerning truths, which none of the philoſophers of Greece and Rome could diſcover; the creation and redemption of the world; the origin and abolition of evil; the reſurrection of the dead; and the final judgment. Theſe were the points in which mankind long wanted and wiſhed to be informed. Yet many have been the ſcoffs and ſneers thrown out by unbelievers againſt the Goſpel, as being the religion of women and children. Never ſurely was wit worſe employed. For if the religion be in itſelf true and excellent, it can receive no prejudice from the circumſtance of being embraced and cultivated by women and children. Juſt the contrary; ſince if God ever vouchſafed a religion to the world, it muſt be adapted to either ſex, and to every age. Chriſtianity is that religion, and glories in being ſo. DISC. III.

Thirdly, there is in the temper and diſpoſition of children ſomething peculiarly acceptable to God our Saviour. "They "brought young children to Chriſt, that

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" he ſhould touch them. His diſciples re-
" buked thoſe that brought them. But when
" Jeſus ſaw it, he was much diſpleaſed, and
" ſaid unto them, Suffer little children to
" come unto me, and forbid them not, for
" of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven. Verily
" I ſay unto you, that if any man ſhall not
" receive the kingdom of God as a little
" child, he ſhall not enter therein. And he
" took them up in his arms, put his hands
" upon them, and bleſſed them." Children, then, are capable of benefit by Chriſt; they are capable of his bleſſing on earth, and his preſence in heaven; ſubjects of his kingdom under grace, and heirs of his kingdom in glory. The beſt office therefore we can perform for them, is to be the means of bringing them to the knowlege of him, that they may be partakers of theſe benefits, and ſo glorify their father which is in heaven. He is pleaſed, when we are thus employed. Nay, he ſets theſe children before us, as little patterns and models of what, in heart and mind, we ourſelves ought to be. Men, if they think of entering into his kingdom,

muſt

must be converted, and become as little children, without pride, without wrath, without luſt, without avarice, without ambition, without prejudice, without guile, open and teachable, all innocence, ſimplicity, ſincerity. Theſe tempers of little children conſtitute the ornaments of religion; and charming it is to behold them diſplayed in the life of a child of God! "The wiſdom "that is from above," ſays St. James, as if this very ſubject had been then in his eye, "is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, and "eaſy to be intreated, full of mercy and "good fruits, without partiality, and with-"out hypocriſy." View the furious Saul, breathing out threatnings and ſlaughters, exceedingly mad againſt the diſciples of Jeſus, and perſecuting them even to ſtrange cities; till ſuddenly humbled to the duſt, by a light and a voice from heaven, you hear him, with all the meekneſs of an infant, exclaiming, "Lord, what wouldeſt thou "have me to do?" Many are the changes of this kind that have been wrought, and many in every age will be wrought, through the

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the power of the Goſpel. By it, in various ways, men are conformed to it's temper and ſpirit: for a due and proper notion of that temper and ſpirit, Chriſt refers us to the ſtate of childhood; a ſtate through which, to ſanctify it for all, himſelf did not diſdain to paſs; and in that, as in every other ſtate, glorified the Father who ſent him. Why, therefore, ſhould it be thought a thing incredible, that "out of the mouth of babes "and ſucklings God ſhould ordain ſtrength, "and perfect praiſe?"

Laſtly, God is honoured, wherever children are taught to confeſs and to praiſe his holy name, becauſe it appears, that his religion is there known and propagated. The circumſtance is a proof that the country where it has taken place is a Chriſtian country; and a pledge, that it will continue to be ſuch.

Under all the divine diſpenſations from the beginning, no duty is ſet higher, or more inſiſted on, than that of inſtructing children in the knowlege of religion. "Abra-

"ham

"ham ſhall ſurely become a great and "mighty nation, and all the nations of the "earth ſhall be bleſſed in him." What more, or greater, can be ſaid of any mere man? Attend to the reaſon, which immediately follows. "For I know him, that he "will command his children after him, and "they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, to do "juſtice and judgment; that the Lord may "bring upon Abraham that which he hath "ſpoken of him [a]." DISC. III.

Thus again, under the law: "Theſe "words, which I command thee this day, "ſhall be in thine heart:" for what purpoſe, or for whoſe ſake? Of themſelves alone? By no means: — "And thou ſhalt teach "them diligently to thy children, and ſhalt "talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thine "houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, "and when thou lieſt down, and when "thou riſeſt up [b]." Children, on their part, are ſuppoſed to be often aſking queſtions upon theſe ſubjects, and ſo to put their

[a] Gen. xviii. 18. [b] Deut. vi. 6.

parents,

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parents, teachers, or friends, upon converſation of this kind. "And it ſhall come to "paſs, when your children ſhall ſay unto "you, What mean you by this ſervice? "that you ſhall ſay, It is the ſacrifice of "the Lord's paſſover, who paſſed over the "houſes of the children of Iſrael in Egypt, "when he ſmote the Egyptians, and de-"livered our houſes[c]."

Reſpecting Chriſtian parents, they are moſt expreſsly enjoined to "bring their "children up in the nurture and admonition "of the Lord;" and to the praiſe of young Timothy, as well as of thoſe relations who had been his inſtructors, it is ſaid, "that "from a child he had known the holy "Scriptures, able to make him wiſe unto "ſalvation, through faith which is in Chriſt "Jeſus."

Conſidering theſe precepts and examples, who could believe he was travelling through a Chriſtian country, when he found the

[c] Exod. xii. 26.

children

children in it ſpeaking and acting like heathens; or, perhaps, in a manner that would diſgrace heathens? DISC. III.

But ſuppoſe no ſuch precepts or examples had been recorded. Religion is not only truth; it is truth the moſt intereſting, the moſt dear, and valuable. It is that on which a man depends for his comfort and joy; for his ſafe conduct through this life, and his eternal happineſs in the next. Would he deprive his children of this comfort, this joy, this ſafe conduct, this eternal happineſs? Would he ſuffer them to live and die in error and vice, if it were in his power to prevent it? Can he bear the thought of ſeeing them at the laſt great day, ſtanding, with the reprobates of all ages, at the *left* hand, and departing into never-ending miſery? The wretched ignorant idolater, who in old time made his children paſs through the fire to Moloch, is leſs to be blamed than ſuch a parent as this.

Should there, however, be a Chriſtian country

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country found, in which the children are as above deſcribed, of one thing we may be abundantly certain, that ſuch a country cannot long continue Chriſtian. They who are now children, will in a few years become men and women; they will ſoon compoſe the great body of the Public: of what kind will that Public be? And how much more depraved ſtill will be the deſcendants of that Public! In ſuch a nation, matters muſt go on from bad to worſe, till the wrath of God break forth, and there be no remedy. The inhabitants will either fall by the ſword of the enemy, or be led away into captivity, or conſumed by civil diſſenſions, biting and devouring one another. For wiſe and moſt important reaſons therefore it was, that when "God eſtabliſhed a teſtimony in Jacob, "and appointed a law in Iſrael, he com- "manded the fathers that they ſhould "make them known to their children; "that the generation to come ſhould know "them, even the children which ſhould be "born; who ſhould ariſe and declare them "to their children; that they might ſet

"their

" their hope in God, and not forget the DISC.
" works of God, but keep his command- III.
" ments[d]."

Had this divine injunction been obeyed, religious knowlege would have been regularly tranſmitted by parents to their children, from generation to generation. But that knowlege once loſt (as from various cauſes it has been loſt) by parents, ignorance muſt thenceforward be tranſmitted in the place of it. In the preſent ſtate of things among us, many are the parents, who can neither teach their children, nor afford to pay for their being taught. How melancholy, and in the end how fatal to ſociety muſt be the conſequences, unleſs the cauſe be taken up by the charitable and well diſpoſed!—Bleſſed be God, it has been taken up by Britons, in a manner unknown to any other age or nation. At the yearly meeting in the Cathedral of the metropolis, 6000 poor children, neatly clothed in the uniform of their reſpective ſchools, are ſeen

[d] Pſ. lxxviii. 5.

arranged

DISC. III. arranged in rising circles, and heard sounding forth together the praises of God. Struck with what they saw and heard (and I suppose the like never was seen or heard), two noblemen of the kingdom of Portugal, and consequently of the Romish persuasion, were overheard to exclaim, at one of these solemnities—"This is life indeed—"We never lived before!"—"Out of the "mouth of babes and sucklings was praise "thus perfected!"

Children clothed and instructed in other parts of the kingdom, cannot meet in this world; but all, if they make a proper use of what they learn, will meet in the next, to give thanks to God, and acknowlege the kindness of their benefactors. A more powerful consideration cannot be urged (and therefore no other needeth to be urged) to encourage all parties concerned in these charities, to perform their respective duties—those who have ability, to give liberally; those who teach, to do it with fidelity; those who learn, with diligence.

DISCOURSE IV.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE SEA.

PSALM XCV. 5.

The Sea is his, and he made it.

WHEN man was firſt formed, creation was his book, and God his preceptor. The elements were ſo many letters, by means of which, when rightly underſtood, and put together, the wiſdom, power, and goodneſs of the great Creator became legible to him.

The proficiency made by Adam under his heavenly teacher, appears from the circumſtance of his impoſing upon the creatures,

DISC. IV. when they were brought to him for that purpoſe, *names* expreſſive of their natures; a taſk which he could never have performed, unleſs, by the aſſiſtance of his divine guide, he had firſt been introduced to an intimate acquaintance with thoſe natures.

Happy the times, when all knowlege thus lay in one volume; when the purſuit of wiſdom was attended by pleaſure, and followed by devotion! For who doth not find delight in contemplating the works of the Lord? Who, when he hath duly contemplated the works, can forbear to praiſe the Workmaſter?

The great and learned champion of the Roman church, who ſpent the beſt part of his life in ſifting the diſputes between the catholics and proteſtants, compoſed, towards the cloſe of his days, a ſmall treatiſe upon the aſcent of the ſoul to God by meditation on the creatures, which, from thenceforth, he made his conſtant companion, and was wont to ſay, it was more ſatisfaction

tion to him to have been the author of that, than of all his large volumes of controverſy. DISC. IV.

The raptures with which the penmen of the holy Scriptures expatiate upon the perfections of God, as diſplayed in the creation, are well known. And could we bring our minds habitually into the ſame train of thinking, every walk we take would begin with admiration, and end with praiſe. We ſhould always, upon ſuch occaſions, *think*, what the pſalmiſt has ſo finely *expreſſed*, after a ſurvey of the heavens above, and the earth beneath—*O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wiſdom haſt thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches!* And who, that looks around him from the delightful place where we now are [a], can forbear to add, *So is this great and wide ſea alſo!* For of this truth let us never be unmindful, that wonderful as the ſea is in itſelf, and beneficial as it is to the ſons of men, all it's wonders and all it's benefits

[a] This Diſcourſe was compoſed at *Brighthelmſtone*.

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reflect glory and honour on him who formed, and poured it abroad—Let us remember, that *The Sea is his, and he made it.*

Such an object, continually before our eyes, invites and demands our attention; and religion calls upon us to ſearch out the riches of divine power and goodneſs contained in it.

When we place ourſelves upon the ſhore, and from thence behold that immenſe body of waters, ſtretching away on all ſides, far as the eye can reach; and when we conſider how large a portion of the globe is covered in like manner; what a noble idea are we hereby enabled to form of the immenſity of that Being who, in the emphatical language of Scripture, is ſaid not only to *weigh the mountains in a balance*, but to *take up the ſea in the hollow of his hand!* In whoſe ſight, the hills are but as duſt, the ocean is no more than a drop. The immeaſurable breadth of the ſea may remind us of God's boundleſs mercy; it's unfathomable depth holds

holds forth an image of his unſearchable judgments. DISC. IV.

When we ſee a maſs of water riſing up by a gradual aſcent, till the ſky ſeems, as it were, to deſcend, and cloſe upon it; a thought immediately ſtrikes us—What is it which prevents theſe waters from breaking in upon, and overflowing the land, as they appear in heaps ſo much above it? Let us adore that unſeen power, which, by a perpetual decree, keeps them in their proper place, nor ſuffers them to intrude themſelves into one which is not theirs. It is God's will that it ſhould be ſo; when he gives the word, *Hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no farther*, plain ſand proves a ſufficient barrier. The obedient waves bow themſelves, and retire. They continue this day according to thine ordinance, O Lord, *for all things ſerve thee*, but rebellious man, whom nothing can reſtrain from paſſing the bounds ſet him by thy commandments!

Hear attentively the *noiſe* of the ſea—

DISC. IV. How grand and awful the ſound! even as the voice of the Almighty God, when he ſpeaketh! St. John, in the Revelation, to give us ſome notion of the praiſes of God as uttered by men and angels, or the choirs of heaven and earth united before the throne, has choſen this ſimilitude, joining two others with it; the creation does not afford a fourth—"I heard as it were the "voice of *much people* in heaven, and the "voice of *many waters*, and the voice of "*mighty thunderings*, ſaying Hallelujah!" And is not this what the waves always ſay, —*Praiſe the Lord*—praiſe him with your voices, as we conſtantly do with ours, while we thus intelligibly proclaim aloud the might of his power, and the glory of his majeſty!

Pleaſing is the variety of proſpects which the ſea, at different times, affords us. For, one while, like the conſcience of a good man, calm and unruffled, it reflects a bright and beautiful image of the light which ſhineth upon it from above; at another, like

like the heart of the wicked, it is dark and cloudy, ſtormy and tempeſtuous, agitated from the very bottom, and it's *reſtleſs waters caſt up mire and dirt.* Reflect, for a moment, on theſe two pictures of virtue and vice; and then doubt, if you can, to which of the originals your choice ought to be directed. DISC. IV.

To behold the ebbing and flowing of the tide, is an amuſement ever new. By this contrivance of infinite wiſdom (whatever ſecond cauſes are employed to produce the effect) the whole maſs of ſea-water is kept in continual motion, which, together with the ſalt contained in it, preſerves it from corrupting (as it would do, if ſtagnant) and poiſoning the world. At one part of the day, therefore, the ocean ſeems to be leaving us, and going to other more favoured coaſts: but at the ſtated period, as if it had only pauſed to recover itſelf, it returns again by gradual advances, till it be arrived to it's former height. There is an ebb and a flow in all human affairs; and a turn of

DISC. IV. events may render him happy who is now miſerable. The veſſel, which is ſtranded, may yet be borne up on the waters; may put out again to ſea, and be bleſſed with a proſperous voyage.

Nor is the ſea more wonderful in itſelf, than it is beneficial to mankind.

From it's ſurface vapours are continually ariſing, drawn upwards by the heat of the ſun, which, by degrees formed into clouds, drop fatneſs on our fields and gardens, cauſing even the wilderneſs to ſmile, and the vallies, covered over with corn, to laugh and ſing. Thus the prayers of the faithful ſervants of God, daily aſcending from all parts of the earth, return in large effuſions of grace and bleſſing from heaven.

But we are indebted to the ocean not only for the vapours ſent up from it's ſurface, but likewiſe for many ſprings, which have their origin from the great deep beneath, with which the ſea communicates. Theſe, ariſing in

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in vapour through the lower parts of the earth, break forth and iſſue in ſtreams, many of which joined form rivers, and ſo go back again to the place from whence they came; as the blood, in the human body, flows, in ſtreams from the heart, through the arteries, and returns to it again, in rivers, by the veins, which grow larger as they approach, and are about to empty themſelves into the great reſervoir. In the greater as well as the leſſer world, there is a conſtant circulation maintained. The income is proportioned to the expence, and nothing is waſted. *All rivers*, ſaith Solomon, *run to the ſea, yet the ſea is not full*, or, does not overflow; *to the place from whence the rivers come, thither do they return again*; but not till, by their innumerable turnings and windings, they have refreſhed and enriched large tracts of country, in their paſſage. So divine grace ſprings up in the heart of a Chriſtian man, as water doth in a fountain, ſupplied from an inviſible and inexhauſtible ſtorehouſe. It flows forth in his words and actions, doing good to all around

DISC. IV. around it in it's courſe, and is finally ſwallowed up and loſt in the boundleſs ocean of infinite perfection.

Barren and deſolate as the ſea appears to thoſe who only look upon it, and ſearch not into it, yet within it's boſom are contained creatures, exceeding in number thoſe that walk and creep upon the land; inſomuch that in the ſacred language, they have their name from a word which ſignifies to multiply. The ingenuity and induſtry of man have found means to draw forth theſe inhabitants of the waters from their deepeſt receſſes. And while they afford to ſome an agreeable variety of wholeſome food, they ſupport multitudes of others, whoſe employment it is to procure them, an employment healthy, honeſt; carried on in peace and quietneſs; without tumult, noiſe, ſtrife, and bloodſhed; affording to thoſe who are engaged in it, continual opportunities of beholding *the works of the Lord, and his wanders in the deep.* Perſons of this occupation, men of plain ſenſe and good hearts,

were

were choſen by our bleſſed Lord, to preach the word of life to the nations, to caſt abroad the evangelical net, and to become, as he himſelf expreſſes it, *Fiſhers of men.* DISC. IV.

By the invention of ſhipping, and the art of navigation, the ſea is made in reality to join thoſe nations, which it appears to divide; the communication being often far more eaſy and expeditious by water, than it would have been by land. The riches of both the Indies are wafted to our ſhores; we ſit at home, and feaſt upon the productions of every country under heaven; while the ſuperfluity of our own commodities is diſpoſed of, to advantage, abroad. A friendly intercourſe is opened between the moſt diſtant lands. Savages are humanized, and become proficients in the arts and ſciences. The goſpel is preached among them, and the light of truth made to ſhine upon thoſe who ſate in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death. They are taught the art of arts, and the ſcience of ſciences; the art of holy living, and the ſcience of ſalvation. A large veſſel,

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veſſel, with all it's conveniences, conſtructed in ſuch a manner as to go upon the ſurface of the water, and to brave the fury of winds and waves, is, perhaps, the maſterpiece of human contrivance. And the pſalmiſt, when contemplating the wonders of the ocean, cries out in admiration, as if placed in a ſituation like this of ours—*There go the ſhips.*

But while we meditate upon the advantages accruing to mankind from a part of the creation, which, at firſt ſight, might ſeem incapable of affording any, let us not be unmindful of the circumſtance which brings us now together, and gives occaſion to this diſcourſe. Let the medicinal powers and ſalutary virtues with which the Almighty hath endued the waters of the ſea, be always had in remembrance by thoſe who have happily experienced them. Let praiſe and glory be rendered to the great Phyſician, who hath made the ocean a magnificent mineral bath, in which, as formerly in the pool of Bethesda, the weak become ſtrong,

and

and the ſick whole. And when we behold the mighty works thus wrought for the bodies of men, let us reflect upon that ſovereign mercy, which, in like manner, ſtrengthens the infirmities, and heals the diſeaſes of our minds; and let us be equally diligent in uſing the means appointed to reſtore *them* to vigour and purity; that ſo, thus doubly benefited and bleſſed, we may expreſs the gratitude of our hearts in thoſe divine words of David—*Praiſe the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me praiſe his holy name. Praiſe the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thy ſin, and healeth all thine infirmities. Who ſaveth thy life from deſtruction, and crowneth thee with loving kindneſs and mercy. Who ſatisfieth thy mouth with good things, ſo that thy life is renewed like the eagle.*

The laſt uſe I ſhall mention which we are to make of the ſea, is that which the Holy Spirit himſelf hath ſo frequently made of it in the Scriptures, viz. to conſider it as an emblem of the world, and of what

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what is paſſing therein. Under a ſmiling deceitful ſurface, both conceal dangerous rocks and quickſands, on which the unſkilful mariner will ſtrike and be loſt. Both abound with creatures purſuing and devouring each other, the ſmall and weak becoming a prey to the great and powerful; while in both there is a grand *deſtroyer, a Leviathan, taking his paſtime*, and ſeeking the perdition of all. In the voyage of life, we may ſet out with a ſtill ſea, and a fair ſky; but ere long, cares and ſorrows, troubles and afflictions overtake us. At God's word, either to puniſh us, or to prove us, from ſome quarter or other, whence perhaps we leaſt expected it, the ſtormy wind ariſeth, and lifteth up the waves. We are carried ſometimes up to heaven with hope, ſometimes down to the deep with deſpair, and our ſoul melteth becauſe of trouble. Then it is, that our heavenly Father ſhews us, what poor helpleſs creatures we are without him; and tribulation becomes the parent of devotion. If we cry unto the Lord in our trouble, he will deliver

ver us out of our diſtreſs. If, with the diſciples in the Goſpel, we go to our Maſter, ſaying, *Lord, ſave us, we periſh*, he will, as he did then, ariſe, and rebuke the winds and the ſea; there will be a calm; and we ſhall arrive in ſafety at the deſired haven. Let us, therefore, conclude, by beſeeching Almighty God, in the words of our moſt excellent church, that we, who by baptiſm were "received into the ark of Chriſt's "Church, being ſtedfaſt in faith, joyful "through hope, and rooted in charity, may "ſo paſs the waves of this troubleſome "world, that finally we may come to the "land of everlaſting life," where all the toſſings and agitations of human affairs ſhall ceaſe, or, as St. John expreſſes it, where there ſhall be "no more SEA."

DISCOURSE V.

THE BLESSING OF A CHEERFUL HEART.

PROV. XVII. Part of the 22d Verſe.

A merry heart doth good like a medicine.

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AMONG the golden maxims delivered out, for the direction of our moral conduct, by him, on whom it pleaſed God to beſtow "largeneſs of heart as the ſand "upon the ſea ſhore," we meet with ſeveral, in different parts of the book of Proverbs, to the ſame effect with that which hath been juſt now read.—"Heavineſs in "the heart of a man maketh it ſtoop; but "a good word maketh it glad. A merry "heart maketh a cheerful countenance; but "by ſorrow of the heart the ſpirit is bro-"ken. All the days of the afflicted are

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"evil; but he that is of a merry heart "hath a continual feaſt. A merry heart "doth good like a medicine; but a broken "ſpirit drieth the bones." To theſe paſſages may be ſubjoined a very fine one from the book of Eccleſiaſticus, written in the ſpirit and ſtyle of Solomon—"Give not "over thy mind to heavineſs, and afflict not "thyſelf in thine own counſel. The gladneſs of the heart is the life of man, and "the joyfulneſs of a man prolongeth his "days. Love thine own ſoul, and comfort "thine heart, remove ſorrow far from thee: "for ſorrow hath killed many, and there is "no profit therein. Envy and wrath ſhorten the life, and carefulneſs bringeth age "before the time[a]."

It is evidently intended, in theſe ſentences, to diſcountenance a gloomy, diſcontented caſt of mind, and to recommend, in it's ſtead, that habit of being pleaſed ourſelves, and of pleaſing others, which is beſt expreſſed, in Engliſh, by the word *cheerfulneſs*: I ſay

[a] Eccluſ. xxx. 21.

habit,

habit, becauſe herein it ſtands diſtinguiſhed from thoſe tranſient flaſhes of mertiment, which are often ſucceeded by an anſwerable depreſſion of ſpirits, and are therefore, by our author, in another place, compared to "the crackling of thorns under a pot;" they blaze for a moment, and expire for ever; whereas cheerfulneſs is even and conſtant; though it blaze leſs, it warms more, and has been very properly called the ſunſhine of life. DISC. V.

The obligations we lie under to cultivate this happy temper of mind, affect us, ſome, as we are *men*; others, as we are *Chriſtians*.

The firſt argument in favour of cheerfulneſs ſhall be drawn from the eminent ſervice it is capable of rendering to the *body*. What powers the ſoul will poſſeſs, or how ſhe will exert them, in a ſeparate ſtate, we cannot tell. During her union with the body, ſhe makes uſe of it as an inſtrument, and is therefore much concerned to keep it in order, that her own operations may

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not be impeded. To do this, ſhe cannot take a more effectual way, than to eſtabliſh and preſerve in herſelf a cheerful diſpoſition. The influence which the mind hath upon the body is well known; inſomuch that the writers upon health and long life never fail to take the *paſſions* into conſideration, of which, they tell us, that the more ſudden and violent ones produce acute diſeaſes, and the ſlow and laſting ones thoſe which are ſtyled chronical. Among theſe latter, it is certain, that no one is more prejudicial to the health of the body, than grief, when long indulged, and ſettled into a habit, whatever may have been it's cauſe, great or little, real or imaginary. It contracts and enfeebles the animal ſpirits, preys upon the ſtrength, and eats out the vigour of the conſtitution; the radical moiſture is conſumed, and the unhappy ſubject of this paſſion droops like a flower in the ſcorching heat of ſummer. "A broken ſpirit," ſays Solomon in the words following thoſe of the text, "drieth the bones." And what is worſt of all, it prevents the good effects of

thoſe

thoſe medicines, which it renders neceſſary. On the other hand, a cheerful diſpoſition of mind always ſeconds the endeavours of the phyſician for the ſervice of the body, and will do half the work in the cure of a diſtemper. It dilates and invigorates the animal ſpirits, quickens the fluids, repairs the ſolids, and maketh the bones fat. Such extenſive influence, in the little world of man, as well as in the larger one of creation, do the ſuperior parts exert upon thoſe which are inferior. Let "the heavens rejoice," and "the earth will be glad." He, therefore, who would enjoy health while he lives, and live long to enjoy it, muſt learn to be cheerful.

Nor, ſecondly, does cheerfulneſs bear an aſpect leſs friendly on the *mind* itſelf, which by melancholy is dejected and broken, and becomes unfit for the performance of it's functions. Under the dominion of ſuch a temper, a man finds himſelf unable to bear up againſt the evils of life, or to taſte it's bleſſings, poured in ever ſo great a profuſion

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around him. He cannot be a partaker of the light which ſhineth upon others, but walketh on ſtill in darkneſs. "All his "days are evil." The duties of his ſtation are unperformed; he can neither be of ſervice to his brethren, nor help himſelf. His judgment is perplexed and confounded; it is difficult for him to make a reſolution, and ſtill more ſo to keep it. His imagination is haunted with fears and terrors; his memory ſerves only to recal the ideas which feed and increaſe the diſorder; and he becomes a burthen to himſelf, and to his friends. But how grievous and pitiable a caſe is this! Perhaps there are few caſes more ſo in the world. Loſſes and calamities, pain and ſickneſs, may be, and often are ſupported, without any great difficulty or inconvenience, by a ſound and vigorous mind. But when the ſupporter itſelf falls, and covers the ground with it's ruins, then the deſolation is complete. "The ſpirit of a man can "ſuſtain his infirmity; but a wounded "ſpirit who can bear?" Would we then avoid ſo ſad a cataſtrophe? We muſt ſhun the

the ſteps that lead to it. Would we be eaſy in our thoughts, and maſters of ourſelves; would we eſcape from the tyranny of the moſt pernicious of paſſions; would we poſſeſs a clear imagination, an undiſturbed judgment, and an unruffled temper; would we perform all the ſocial offices with alacrity and pleaſure; would we reliſh the comforts of life, and not feel the weight of its troubles; would we, in a word, enjoy ſerenity and complacency of mind ourſelves, and diffuſe them around us, wherever we go? All theſe are the privileges of cheerfulneſs, and unanſwerable reaſons why we ſhould cultivate that diſpoſition in our own hearts, and preſs the neceſſity of ſo doing on all our acquaintance.

A third argument in favour of cheerfulneſs may be deduced from a ſurvey of the *world* in which we live, and in which we find things framed not only for neceſſity, but pleaſure; not only for uſe, but beauty. The lights which God hath "ſet in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day from "the night, to be for ſigns, and for ſeaſons,

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"for days, and for years," while they anſwer all thoſe purpoſes, according to his ordinance, do, at the ſame time, cheer and delight us, by their ſplendid appearance. The bloſſoms of the ſpring, which ſerve to protect the infant fruit; the glories of ſummer, which mature and bring it to perfection; and the riches with which autumn overſpreads the face of a country, contribute as much to the ſatisfaction of the beholder, as they do to the huſbandman's advantage. The ſame genial power which brings food out of the earth for the nouriſhment of the animals that walk upon it, arrays it in a colour the moſt agreeable and refreſhing to the eye of man. And let any one, who walks forth, at the proper ſeaſon of the year, to contemplate the creation in its beauty; who beholds the brightneſs of the ſun, the clearneſs of the ſky, the verdure of the earth, well watered paſtures clothed with flocks, valleys covered over with corn, and woods reſounding with the muſic of birds; let ſuch an one determine (to uſe the words of an elegant and pious writer upon the ſubject) "whether Providence deſigned, this world

"ſhould

" ſhould be filled with murmurs and repin- DISC.
" ings, or that the heart of man ſhould be in- V.
" volved in gloom and melancholy[b]." Certainly the Pſalmiſt was of another opinion, whoſe deſcription of the pleaſing objects, with which nature abounds, may ſupply their abſence, and make them preſent to our minds: —" He ſendeth the ſprings into the valleys, " which run among the hills. They give " drink to every beaſt of the field; the " wild aſſes quench their thirſt. By them " ſhall the fowls of heaven have their habi- " tation, and ſing among the branches. He " watereth the hills from his chambers; the " earth is ſatisfied with the fruit of thy " works. He cauſeth the graſs to grow for " the cattle, and herb for the ſervice of " man, that he may bring forth food out of " the earth; and wine that maketh glad the " heart of man, and oil to make his face " to ſhine, and bread which ſtrengtheneth " man's heart." A ſurvey of creation drove away all ſadneſs from the heart of David, and filled it with admiration, joy and glad-

[b] SPECTATOR.

neſs.

DISC. V. neſs. "O Lord," ſays he, "how manifold "are thy works! In wiſdom haſt thou "made them all; the earth is full of thy "riches!—I will ſing unto the Lord, as "long as I live; I will ſing praiſe unto my "God, while I have my being. My medi-"tation of him ſhall be ſweet; I will be "glad in the Lord." A reſolution, ſo juſt and well founded, ſuggeſteth to us a

Fourth argument on the behalf of a cheerful diſpoſition of mind, as it is a duty we owe to our *Maker*, who hath placed us in a world thus ſtocked with objects, capable of inſpiring complacency and delight. For it was, doubtleſs, his intention, that, by contemplating the beauties and glories of the creation, we might be led to make ſuitable returns of gratitude and thankfulneſs to the Creator. But gloom and melancholy will never ſuffer emotions like theſe to ariſe in a mind, of which they have taken poſſeſſion. Such a temper, therefore, when it is become a fixed and ſettled one, appears not only to be to the laſt degree inconvenient

convenient and tormenting, but to have a manifeſt tincture of impiety. To receive the gifts of Heaven with a ſour aſpect and a ſullen ſilence, what is it but to throw them back, with diſdain, to the bountiful Donor, declaring, that we will have none of them? It is the rebellious obſtinacy of a wayward child, againſt the gracious offers of the moſt indulgent of fathers. Whereas a cheerful ſtate of mind (to uſe the words of the excellent writer before cited) is "a conſtant "habitual gratitude to the great Author of "nature; an implicit praiſe and thankſgiving "to Providence under all it's diſpenſations; "a kind of acquieſcence in the ſtate where- "in we are placed, and a ſecret approbation "of the divine will in it's conduct towards "man. The cheerfulneſs of heart which "ſprings up in us from the ſurvey of na- "ture's works, is an admirable preparation "for gratitude. The mind has gone a great "way towards praiſe and thankſgiving, that "is filled with ſuch a ſecret gladneſs. A "grateful reflection on the ſupreme Cauſe "who produces it, ſanctifies it in the ſoul, "and DISC. V.

DISC. V. "and gives it it's proper value; conſecrates "every field and wood, and turns an ordi- "nary walk into a morning or evening ſa- "crifice[c]."

Such are the obligations to cultivate a cheerful diſpoſition, which affect us as *men*, wiſhing to poſſeſs a ſound *mind* in a healthful *body*; to taſte the beauties and excellencies of the *world* in which we are placed; and to make a due return of gratitude and thankfulneſs to *God* who placed us in it. Let us now conſider the additional motives afforded us, as *Chriſtians*, by the religion we profeſs.

The nature of that religion is ſufficiently expreſſed by the term ſo often uſed to denote it. It is a communication of *good news*, which ſhould be received, in this caſe, as in all others, with a joy proportionable to it's importance; and as it is of the higheſt importance, ſhould be therefore productive of the greateſt joy. The patriarchs and

[c] SPECTATOR.

prophets,

prophets, who viewed afar off that wonderful event, which hath ſince taken place, were affected by it in a very ſenſible and lively manner. "Your father Abraham," ſays our Lord to the Jews, "*rejoiced* to ſee my day, and he ſaw it, and was *glad*." Iſaiah is in raptures whenever he has occaſion to touch upon the ſubject—"How beautiful upon "the mountains are the feet of him that "bringeth good tidings!—Break forth into "joy, ſing together, ye waſte places of Je- "ruſalem; for the Lord hath comforted "his people. Sing, O heavens, for the Lord "hath done it; ſhout, ye lower parts of the "earth; break forth into ſinging, ye moun- "tains, O foreſt, and every tree therein; "for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and "glorified himſelf in Iſrael." When the predictions were accompliſhed, and the divine perſon, who had been the ſubject of them, made his appearance in the fleſh, the heavenly meſſenger publiſhed the news in the following terms—"Behold, I bring "you good tidings of *great joy*, which ſhall "be to all people." The Goſpel was accordingly DISC. V.

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cordingly received by the firſt converts on the day of Pentecoſt, "with gladneſs and "ſingleneſs of heart." Into whatſoever city or country it came, "there was great joy "in that place;" and the joy, we find, was ſuch that it raiſed it's poſſeſſors above the world, and triumphed over all afflictions. Of other things they were often deſpoiled; but "their joy no man took from them." In every ſituation and condition they did then what the Apoſtle exhorts all Chriſtians to do; they "rejoiced evermore."

Nor can we wonder, that the Goſpel ſhould, in it's name and nature, portend joy, when we reflect, that its *end* was, to deliver mankind from ſorrow. Sorrow firſt entered into the world, as a neceſſary attendant on ſin, which filled the minds of men with diſquietude and anxiety, their bodies with diſeaſes and pains. The Goſpel removes the former by the pardon it holds forth, and enables us cheerfully to bear the latter, by the grace it confers. God therefore repreſents himſelf in it, as "the God of love,

"and

"and of all conſolation." Our Lord calls us to him, that he may "give us reſt and "refreſhment;" that he may "wipe all "tears from our eyes;" that we may "enter into our Maſter's joy;" and that "our "joy may be full." For this purpoſe he has ſent us a bleſſed "Comforter, to abide "with us for ever," whoſe firſt fruits are, "love, joy, and peace;" a Spirit, cheerful in himſelf, and making thoſe cheerful, who are partakers of him; cheerful in trouble, cheerful out of trouble; cheerful while they live, cheerful when they die; cheerful in uſing well the bleſſings of this life, cheerful in expecting the bleſſedneſs of the next; cheerful through faith, while they believe in the great and precious promiſes made to them; cheerful through hope, which depends upon their accompliſhment; cheerful through charity, in doing acts of mercy and loving kindneſs; till they come to that land of plenty, where none ſhall want; to thoſe regions of joy, from whence ſorrow ſhall be for ever excluded.

There

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There is no occaſion to be more particular upon this topic. It appears evidently, that, whether we conſider the name, the nature, or the end of the Goſpel, it's author, it's doctrines, it's duties, or the Spirit which accompanies it; every way, it is a diſpenſation of love and peace, conſolation and joy. So that a good Chriſtian, of all men, has moſt cauſe to be cheerful. Some have gone ſo far as to affirm, that it is impious in ſuch an one to be otherwiſe.

A celebrated writer on the ſide of ſcepticiſm and irreligion, in a book publiſhed, ſince his death, to recommend atheiſm to the world, has been pleaſed to ſay, that all the devout perſons he had ever ſeen were melancholy. This might very poſſibly be; for, in the firſt place, it is moſt likely, that he ſaw very few, his friends and acquaintance being of another ſort; and, ſecondly, the ſight of *him* would make a devout perſon melancholy, at any time.

But it may be ſaid, How can theſe things

things be? Doth not the Goſpel call us to repentance? And is not repentance attended by mourning? Are we not commanded to renounce the world, and to mortify the fleſh; to abſtain from jollity and pleaſure; to deny ourſelves, to faſt, to watch, and to pray? How then can ſuch a religion as this be a ſource of cheerfulneſs and joy? DISC. V.

It is moſt certainly true, that the Goſpel calleth us to repentance; and it is equally true, that repentance is attended by mourning. But is this the fault of religion, or of the ſinner? Of the ſinner, ſurely, who by his conduct makes repentance neceſſary, and then is angry to find that it is not agreeable. Phyſic is ſeldom ſo; and he, who has contracted a diſeaſe, muſt ſubmit to the remedy, if he would recover his health. But the fact is, that true penitents have never failed to declare, they felt a greater joy in the midſt of their ſorrow, through a comfortable ſenſe of God's returning favour, than ever they did in the commiſſion of their ſin, which was ſure to be followed, if it were

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not accompanied, by the ſtings and terrors of conſcience.

As to the world and the fleſh, jollity and pleaſure, if we are bidden to renounce, to mortify, and to abſtain from them, it is by way of friendly caution, leſt they ſhould endanger the health of our minds, and bring on a relapſe. They are taken from us by the kind hand of our heavenly Father, that ſomething more wholeſome, and more truly delightful, may be communicated to us, and reliſhed by us. "Be not drunk with wine," ſays the Apoſtle; "but be filled with the "Spirit." And he who makes the exchange, can be no loſer by it. In a word, there is infinitely more joy in ſubduing a paſſion, than there can be in gratifying it; and, if we are to be determined by experienced perſons, who have fairly tried both, they tell us, the pleaſures of ſin are far inferior to thoſe afforded even by the ſevereſt and moſt unpromiſing exerciſes of religion. The objection therefore, when conſidered and anſwered, turns out (as all objections in the

end

end do) to the advantage of the Goſpel, which reſembles a fine country in the ſpring ſeaſon, where the very *hedges* are in bloom, and every *thorn* produces a flower. The joys of the world end in ſorrow; but the ſorrows of religion terminate in joy. "Bleſ-"ſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall "be comforted." And it is very obſervable, that our Lord enjoins his diſciples not to appear abroad with a ſour and gloomy countenance, but, in their converſe with mankind, to preſerve their uſual cheerfulneſs, even at thoſe ſeaſons, when they are exerciſing upon themſelves any act of religious diſcipline. "When ye faſt, be not, as the "hypocrites, of a ſad countenance: for they "diſfigure their faces, that they may ap-"pear unto men to faſt. But thou, when "thou faſteſt, anoint thine head, and waſh "thy face; that thou appear not unto men "to faſt, but unto thy Father, which is "in ſecret: and thy Father, which ſeeth in "ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly."

Such, then, are the motives for culti-

DISC. V. vating a cheerful diſpoſition, which reaſon dictates to us as men, and religion preſcribes to us as Chriſtians. You would wiſh perhaps to know, by what means this happy temper may be acquired, and preſerved.

We have before had occaſion to mention the influence which the mind hath on the body. It is neceſſary here to take notice of the influence which the body ſometimes hath on the mind, and to obſerve that melancholy is not infrequently conſtitutional, taking it's riſe from ſome diſtemperature of the blood and juices. This has, perhaps, a ſhare in the production and increaſe of what is called *religious*, but ſhould rather be called *irreligious* melancholy, much oftener than is generally imagined. That the effect, therefore, may ceaſe, the cauſe muſt be removed, and application muſt be made to the phyſician, rather than to the divine.

When this is not the caſe, but the diſorder lies originally in the mind, many uſeful directions may be given for it's removal.

Three

Three things more eſpecially are to be avoided by him who would poſſeſs a cheerful Spirit. DISC. V.

The firſt of theſe is *idleneſs*. The mind of man, being an active and reſtleſs principle, muſt have ſome matter given it to work upon, or it will turn it's force inward, and prey upon itſelf. When grief proceeds from a *real* cauſe, and not from one that is imaginary, it admits of no remedy more expeditious and efficacious, than that of diverting the thoughts from the ſubject which occaſioned it, by providing for them ſome other employment; as we are told of a famous Roman general, who had loſt his ſon, that he found a cure for his ſorrow, in the heat and hurry of war[d]. And it is obvious to obſerve, that the ſedentary and inactive, they who are retired from buſineſs, or they who were never engaged in any, are the perſons that ſuffer moſt by the incurſions of melancholy, from

[d] Agricola—"In luctu bellum inter remedia erat." Tacit. in Vitâ. See the firſt lines of a Poem ſtyled the LIBRARY, printed for Dodſley, 1781.

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which, they themſelves will tell us, they have never failed to be relieved, as often as, by any extraordinary call, they have been rouzed from indolence, and forced upon action. The malady which deſtroys ſo many conſtitutions, and makes ſuch numbers miſerable who have nothing elſe to make them ſo, is unknown to him, whom neceſſity obliges to toil for his bread. With the ſun he riſes, full of life and vigour, to his appointed taſk. Upon that his attention is engaged all day, and the performance of it ſecures to him an uninterrupted repoſe at night, according to Solomon's obſervation: "The ſleep of a *labouring* man is ſweet." From all which we may venture to conclude, that happineſs conſiſts in employment, and that to be idle is to be wretched.

A ſecond thing to be avoided is *guilt*. We muſt not only be employed, but we muſt be well employed. To every ſtation Providence has annexed it's proper offices and duties. We ſhall always find the diſcharge of theſe to be one ſource of cheerfulneſs,

fulneſs, and the conſciouſneſs of having diſcharged them will always furniſh us with another. They are pleaſant not only in the act, but in the remembrance. They are labours, which will have their reward from the hand of our Maſter in heaven. They are labours, which will end in reſt eternal, and will make that reſt to be ſweet indeed. But what title can that man have to cheerfulneſs, who has done thoſe things only which he ought not to have done? Guilt and cheerfulneſs cannot dwell under the ſame roof. It is not fit they ſhould. The conſequence of guilt unrepented and unexpiated, is the wrath of God. And he on whom the wrath of God abideth, has no reaſon to be cheerful. It is folly, it is madneſs in him to be ſo, as it muſt argue an utter ignorance and inſenſibility of his condition. The Pſalmiſt tells us, that "Light is ſown for the righ-"teous, and gladneſs for the upright in "heart;" and therefore he adds—"Rejoice "in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks "at the remembrance of his holineſs."

A third thing to be avoided, as capable

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of for ever excluding cheerfulneſs from the breaſt in which it has fixed it's reſidence, is *infidelity*. Take from man the expectation of another world, and you render him at once the moſt miſerable creature in this, as having, by his ſuperior ingenuity, contrived for himſelf a great variety of racks and tortures, to which all other animals are ſtrangers. Preſent cares and preſent calamities would fall heavy upon us indeed, were they not ſweetened and alleviated by the proſpect of future joys. So delightful did the glimpſe of ſuch a proſpect appear to the great Roman orator, that he declared, if it were a deluſion, he deſired and had determined to live and die under it[c]. Who among us could be cheerful, while he entertained the thought either of not being at all after death, which muſt be the atheiſt's lot, if his ſyſtem be true; or of being for ever miſerable, which will be his caſe, if his ſyſtem ſhould be falſe? On a perſon of this caſt it ſhould ſeem needleſs to inflict any other puniſhment, than that of leaving him to the horrors of his gloomy imagination,

[c] Cicero de Senectute, ad fin.

till

till he feel himſelf to want thoſe joys and comforts, of which he hath laboured to deprive others. DISC. V.

Upon the whole — May it not be queſtioned, whether there be not ſome degree of infidelity at the bottom of moſt of that anxiety and diſquietude, which is ſo much complained of under the ſun? For why do we grieve and lament that things are as they are? Why do we murmur and repine at what has happened? Why do we muſe and diſturb ourſelves about what may happen? Is it not all from want of faith? Did we but attend to the inſtructions of this heavenly guide, ſhe would teach us, that it is God who governs the world; that he governs it in wiſdom and righteouſneſs; and that therefore it is but reaſonable, we ſhould leave the government of it to him; that he who hath ſhewed his love towards us in the greateſt inſtance of all, will not withhold it in others; that he who hath given his Son to die for us, will not deny us any thing which will contribute to our real welfare;

and

DISC. V. and that we may ſafely caſt all our care upon him, who will make all things in the end work together for good to them that truſt in him. Theſe conſiderations, were they but rendered habitual to our minds, and ready for conſtant uſe and application, would brighten the darkeſt ſcenes of human life, and cauſe ſolicitude and deſpondency to fly away. Religion would then gain by it's profeſſors that credit and honour which it deſerves, and the deſigns of heaven would be fully anſwered, which moſt undoubtedly were, that innocence and cheerfulneſs ſhould go together, and the beſt Chriſtian be the happieſt man.

The Verſes referred to in page 101, from a Poem ſtyled THE LIBRARY.

WHEN the ſad ſoul, by care and grief oppreſt,
Looks round the world, but looks in vain, for reſt;
When every object that appears in view
Partakes her gloom, and ſeems afflicted too;
Where ſhall affliction from itſelf retire?
Where fade away, and placidly expire?
Alas! we fly to ſilent ſcenes in vain,
Care blaſts the honours of the flow'ry plain,

He

He veils in clouds the ſun's meridian beam,
Sighs through the grove, and murmurs in the ſtream;
For when the ſoul is labouring in deſpair,
In vain the body breathes a purer air;
No ſtorm-toſt ſailor ſighs for *ſlumbering* ſeas,
He dreads the tempeſt, but invokes the *breeze*;
On the ſmooth mirror of the deep reſides
Reflected woe, and o'er unruffled tides
The ghoſt of every former danger glides.
Thus in the calms of life we only ſee
A ſteadier image of our miſery;
But lively gales, and gently-clouded ſkies,
Diſperſe the ſad reflections as they riſe;
And buſy thoughts, and little cares, prevail,
To eaſe the mind, when reſt and reaſon fail.
When the dull thought, by no deſigns employ'd,
Dwells on the paſt, or ſuffer'd or enjoy'd,
We bleed anew in ev'ry former grief,
And joys departed furniſh no relief.

DISCOURSE VI.

THE DUTY OF PRAYING FOR GOVERNORS.

1 TIMOTHY II. 1, 2.

I exhort that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.

AN exhortation from an Apostle always merits attention; but more especially, when he himself assures us, that the subject of it is not of an inferior or secondary nature. "I exhort that, first of "all" — The person exhorting is St. Paul, the duty to which he exhorts is a capital and leading article. It is the duty of intercession

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ceſſion to be made by all men for all men, to manifeſt the love we bear for one another, as members of Him, who, at the right hand of God, ever liveth to make interceſſion for the whole race of mankind. Our prayers are united with his, and by him offered to the Father; his merits, like the cloud of ſweet incenſe from the altar, aſcending with them, to render them effectual. Effectual, in ſome manner, they muſt be, when rightly made; otherwiſe, we ſhould not have been exhorted to make them. The ſalutary influence produced on our own minds by a performance of the duty, has been ſometimes aſſigned as the only reaſon for it's being enjoined. That influence is great and ſalutary indeed, ſeeing it is impoſſible we ſhould long bear ill will to thoſe, whom in our prayers we beſeech God to bleſs with every kind of bleſſing in time and eternity. It is an excellent method, therefore, of ſoftening the temper, and inducing a mild, merciful, and forgiving diſpoſition in the perſon interceding. But to ſay that no benefit accrues to the perſon or perſons for whom interceſſion

ceſſion is made, what is it but to contradict the whole tenor of Scripture, which ſhews us in ſo many inſtances the regard vouchſafed by Heaven to the prayers of men, and the favours granted in conſequence of them. It is neceſſary for us to ſettle ourſelves firmly in the belief of this point, becauſe no man will perſevere in doing that which he apprehends himſelf to do to no purpoſe. As to the manner in which the divine Being orders and adjuſts his various diſpenſations, we can no more comprehend it, than a fly on one of the columns of the building in which we are now aſſembled, can comprehend the magnificence of the whole, or the proportion of the ſeveral parts. He will certainly perform that which he has promiſed: how he will perform it, is a conſideration which belongs to him, and not to us. Proceed we therefore to the immediate ſubject of the day, namely, the duty of making interceſſion for kings, and for all that are in authority. The reaſons on which this duty is founded ſhall be conſidered, as they reſpect God; as they reſpect thoſe who

DISC. VI. who govern; and as they reſpect thoſe who are governed.

I. As they reſpect God, it would indeed be ſufficient, that he has enjoined the duty, even though we could aſſign no other reaſon. There is no danger leſt HE ſhould be too abſolute. Whenever he commands, we have nothing to do, but to obey; and we ſhall always find our account in it. "This"—ſays the Apoſtle in the words immediately following the words of the text—"This "is good and acceptable in the ſight of "God our Saviour;" of God who is our Saviour, or, of our Saviour who is God; for it holds either way. But what are we, ſinful men, thy unworthy ſervants, O Lord, that we ſhould be ſufficient to do any thing that is good and acceptable in thy ſight? What are we, if, when thou art graciouſly pleaſed to ſay ſo, we ſhould either refuſe or neglect to do it?

But there is a very obvious reaſon why this is deemed good and acceptable in the ſight

ſight of God our Saviour. It is an acknowlegement of his providence, his power, and his goodneſs: of his providence, as ſuperintending and directing the affairs of men; of his power, as being able to protect, preſerve, and proſper thoſe for whom our prayers are preferred; and of his goodneſs, as being willing ſo to protect, to preſerve, and to proſper them. What the act of interceſſion thus implies, is expreſſed, with wonderful ſublimity, in the daily collect for the king, when we ſtyle God, "our "Lord and heavenly Father, high and "mighty, King of kings, Lord of lords, "the only ruler of princes, who does from "his throne behold all the dwellers upon "earth;" and therefore "beſeech him with "his favour to behold our moſt gracious "ſovereign lord," who reigns over us. This is a noble confeſſion of the unlimited extent, the undoubted ſuperiority, of divine Providence; a powerful argument for confidence that we ſhall obtain the petitions we aſk; and as powerful an argument againſt impeding the ſucceſs of our prayers, by

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ſinning at any time in his preſence, "who "from his throne does thus behold all the "dwellers upon earth." If God be on our right hand, we ſhould ſuffer ourſelves to be neither ſeduced, nor terrified.

There is yet another conſideration to be urged in the caſe before us. When we intreat the Almighty, that he would protect and preſerve government amongſt us, we intreat him to protect and preſerve that, which is his own appointment, and by all good and conſcientious men is to be obeyed as ſuch. All power is originally and eſſentially in God; from him it deſcends to man. Pontius Pilate, about to paſs ſentence on the innocent Jeſus, was not making a due uſe of his power; but even then, that power was by the innocent Jeſus recognized and allowed. "Thou "couldeſt have no power at all againſt me, "except it were given thee from above." Accordingly by our Apoſtle we are told, "There is no power but of God; the "powers that be"—the powers ſubſiſting—"are ordained of God." So far as relates

to

to the different modes by which, in different constitutions, rulers become invested with their power—so far government is, what St. Peter styles it, "an ordinance of man," regulated by human laws. But when, by rulers becoming so invested, government commences and is in force, it must be submitted to "for the Lord's sake;" not only through fear of punishment, but because God, who is the great king over all the earth, has commanded us, for the peace of the world, and the comfort of society, to consider our governors as armed with his authority, and to be subject to them as to himself. Resistance to them will be accounted as resistance to him. DISC. VI.

These are the plain and simple politics of the Bible; easily understood, but, like many other duties, when we are aggrieved, or fancy ourselves to be aggrieved, not so easily practised. The bias of human nature, in it's present state, does not draw towards obedience. A late historian, who believed equally in the Bible and the Alcoran, has observed, that no harm can arise from the

DISC. VI. circumſtance of this doctrine being preached by the miniſters of the Goſpel; becauſe whenever the proper time for rebellion, in any nation, comes, the people will always find it out, without being told. The only danger is, leſt they ſhould rebel too ſoon, before that time arrive. We give him credit for the obſervation; nothing can be more certain. Let not the moſt ſanguine advocate for liberty, who dreams conſtantly of the ſubverſion of the conſtitution, and in the viſions of the night beholds his prince becoming abſolute, and preparing to ruin and murder all his ſubjects—let not ſuch an one, I ſay, be under any apprehenſions, that all the preaching in the church will prevent faction in the ſtate: there will always be found a ſufficient proportion of it: nor let any man be offended, if we now repeat our poſition, that the conſideration of government being God's appointment, affords a very ſolid reaſon why "prayers, ſup-"plications, interceſſions, and giving of "thanks, ſhould be made for kings and for "all that are in authority."

II. Other

II. Other reaſons will offer themſelves reſpecting rulers, and the ſituation in which they are placed. DISC. VI.

If we are to make interceſſion, we are to make it chiefly for thoſe who ſtand moſt in need of it; for thoſe, who in this life have the largeſt ſhare of temptations and of troubles.

Now, who upon earth is expoſed to ſo many and powerful temptations as a king? Has he a propenſity to the pleaſures of ſenſe? They are all at his command: they ſtand around him, only waiting for his call, to return anſwer, "Here we are." Has avarice taken poſſeſſion of his breaſt? It may be gratified by amaſſing treaſures, inſtead of expending them in generous and noble donations. Is he diſpoſed to pride? He has every thing the world can furniſh to puff him up. Does ambition fire him to aggrandize himſelf at the expence of his neighbours; to ſeize that to which he has no right; to deſolate whole countries, and de-

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luge them with the blood of the inhabitants? The inſtruments of deſtruction are prepared; fleets and armies move when the word is given. In ſhort, does either appetite or paſſion at any time excite him to do that which he ought not to do? The means are at hand, and there are always thoſe who will flatter and encourage him in following his inclinations.

But ſuppoſe him manfully to reſiſt theſe temptations; and now let us view that ſea of troubles, which threatens to overwhelm him in the diſcharge of his office. He muſt feel, day and night, the weight of that office, the various duties to be performed, and the difficulty, nay, almoſt impoſſibility, of performing them all, in any tolerable manner. Deceived by others in matters concerning which he cannot inform himſelf, or ſee them with his own eyes, he finds he has done wrong, when his whole intention was to do right; and perhaps beſtowed his favours on worthleſſneſs and profligacy, when he deſigned to reward virtue and merit. Expoſed continually

continually to the ſhock of parties contending, oſtenſibly, for the public good, but, in reality, for places of honour and emolument, he knows not, at length, whom to truſt or employ; nor muſt he truſt and employ thoſe whom he would wiſh to truſt and employ; but is often under the neceſſity of diſcarding men whom he loves, and taking to his boſom men whom he cannot love. In the mean time, a ſet of libertine, unprincipled writers in proſe and verſe are ready to exhibit him to his people as a monſter, to miſrepreſent and traduce his beſt actions, to aggravate his errors, and treat him in a manner in which he himſelf would diſdain to treat the beggar at his gate.—Is a perſon thus circumſtanced an object of envy? No;—if there be any bowels of love and mercy, pity and pray for him, that God would grant him patience in ſuffering evil, and perſeverance in doing good, to the end of his days. DISC. VI.

This all of us may do; and this is all that moſt of us can do. By interceſſion

DISC. VI. with heaven there is a communion opened of the greateſt with the leaſt; and to the prayers of the meaneſt and remoteſt ſubject of the empire, who knows him only by name when he prays for him, may the ſovereign ſtand indebted for ſome part of the favour and proſperity vouchſafed him, who needs the prayers of his people, becauſe the cares and the toils of buſineſs will often ſcarcely allow him time and compoſure of mind to pray for himſelf.

III. But it is not only a regard to our rulers which ſuggeſts reaſons why we ſhould pray for them. A regard to ourſelves ſhould operate no leſs. Our own intereſt is deeply concerned. "I exhort that ſupplications, "prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks, "be made for kings, and for all that are "in authority"—Why?—"That we may "lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all "godlineſs and honeſty;" a "quiet and "peaceable life," as citizens; "in all god-"lineſs and honeſty," as Chriſtians,

"A quiet

"A quiet and peaceable life!"—What a bleſſing! involving in it all other bleſſings. Without quiet and peace, what can we purſue with pleaſure, or enjoy with comfort? The Scriptures paint it under the lovely and affecting image of "every "man ſitting under his own vine, and un-"der his own fig-tree"—"Sitting"—a poſture of perfect eaſe and ſecurity—"under "his own vine"—ſomething that he can call his own, guarded and inſured to him by the laws and government of his country. Without laws, and government to carry thoſe laws into execution, there would be nothing that he could call his own. His next neighbour, who had a mind for it, and was ſtronger than he, muſt have it, and with it the life of the proprietor offering to defend it. The weak muſt be a prey to the ſtrong, and the honeſt man be ruined by the villain, without redreſs or remedy. We of this nation (bleſſed be our God for it) know not what it is to ſee government overturned by war from abroad, or inſurrection at home. For years toge-

ther

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ther have we been enabled to ſit compoſedly in our habitations, and read accounts of what other countries have ſuffered in this way. Warm and comfortable within, we have heard the ſtorm rage and howl around us without, waiting only for the return of a clear ſky and the ſun, to open our doors, and go forth again. This has rendered us inſenſible of the felicity we enjoy, becauſe we have never been deprived of it; and men are ready, in the wantonneſs of their folly, upon every trifling occaſion, while ſerving the intereſts of themſelves and their friends, to ſhake the foundations of the government under which they live, never reflecting on the calamities which muſt light upon all, were the fabric to fall, in the conteſt. But the States of America can tell what they have ſuffered: the States of Holland can tell what they expected to ſuffer: the inhabitants in ſome parts of a neighbouring kingdom can inform us (in the midſt of a civilized and enlightened age) what it is to have the fleſh torn from their bones, or be buried alive in the earth.

Of

Of theſe and other tranſactions we now ſit and read (as was obſerved above) with perfect calmneſs. But ſuppoſe—God forbid the ſuppoſition ſhould ever be realized; it is made, that it never may be realized—Suppoſe, I ſay, they ſhould come home to ourſelves. DISC. VI.

More than a century has paſſed, ſince this nation experienced the miſeries of anarchy and confuſion; when unhappy diſſenſions afforded opportunity for a crafty and ambitious upſtart to murder the king, annihilate one houſe of parliament, and having turned the members out of the other, walk unmoleſted to Whitehall, with the key of it in his pocket. This was LIBERTY, planted by able and ſkilful hands, duly watered and full blown! Great events from little cauſes! Who would have thought ſuch an event could have happened, when the diſpute firſt began? Who could believe it ever did happen, had we not incontrovertible evidence to prove it? Leaſt of all, who would wiſh to ſee it, or any thing like it,

happen

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happen again? Let not, then, the principles which produced it be adopted and diſſeminated amongſt us: let not the governed be taught to eſteem themſelves ſuperior to their governors; but let all be taught, as they "fear God," to "honour the king;" that is, to "honour the king," becauſe they "fear God," who has commanded them ſo to do. Our felicity depends on the ſafety of the prince, and the ſtability of government, which may fail, among other reaſons, through our neglect to pray for them. Our ingratitude, ungodlineſs, and indevotion, as well as our other vices and crimes, may bring a blaſt on the deſigns of our rulers; and while we blame the king and his miniſters, the fault may be entirely our own. "Let ſupplications, prayers, "interceſſions, and giving of thanks, be "made, therefore, for kings and all that "are in authority, that we may lead a "quiet and peaceable life," as citizens; and that we may lead it "in all godlineſs "and honeſty," as Chriſtians.

For

For if the ſtate be diſturbed, the church cannot remain in peace; among the bleſſings of which, this is ever to be eſteemed the greateſt, that religion is then beſt cultivated, and made to flouriſh in a land. It's miniſters enjoy leiſure and opportunity to celebrate it's ſolemn offices, to meditate upon it, to write upon it, to preach, and to publiſh books upon it, for the edification of their people. Of all this what can be done in the midſt of war and tumults, when prieſts and people are flying before their common enemies, or engaged in civil commotions againſt each other? The Iſraelitiſh monarch, driven by rebellion from his capital, and in danger of his life, is very affecting upon this circumſtance. The remembrance of better times occurred to his mind; of times, when he went in proceſſion with the multitude, and led his ſubjects into the houſe of God, with the voice of praiſe and thankſgiving, among ſuch as kept holy day. A compariſon of his former happy with his then afflicted condition almoſt broke his heart. "When I remember

"theſe

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" theſe things, I pour out my ſoul in me." But faith came to his aſſiſtance, and bade him not deſpair the return of thoſe happy times, when he ſhould again viſit the temple, in like manner as before. " Why art " thou caſt down, O my ſoul, and why art " thou diſquieted in me? Hope thou in " God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him for the " help of his countenance."

In a ſeaſon of greater calamity and diſtreſs in our own country, this venerable cathedral, by the reformers of that period, was converted into a ſtable; and ſmall indeed was the proſpect of it's ever being reſtored to it's original uſe and beauty. But, by the divine mercy, we are now aſſembled in it, " with the voice of joy and praiſe, to keep " holy day." We have a church, and we have a king; and we muſt pray for the proſperity of the laſt, if we wiſh to retain the firſt. The levelling principle of the age extends throughout. A republic, the darling idol of many amongſt us, would probably, as the taſte now inclines, come attended

attended by a religion without biſhop, prieſt, or deacon; without ſervice, or ſacraments; without a Saviour to juſtify, or a Spirit to ſanctify; in ſhort, a claſſical religion, without adoration.

The external part of religion is, doubtleſs, of little value, in compariſon with the internal; and ſo is the caſk, in compariſon with the wine contained in it: but if the caſk be ſtaved, the wine muſt periſh. If there were no Sundays, or holy days, no miniſters, no churches, or religious aſſemblies, no prayers, or ſacraments, no Scriptures read, or ſermons preached, how long would there be any religion left in the world; and who would deſire to live in a world where there was none? It is to enable the miniſters of Chriſt to perform all theſe their functions, for the benefit of mankind, in peace and quietneſs, with due decency and dignity, that kings are by divine appointment conſtituted "nurſing fathers" of the church, "and queens it's nurſing mothers;"

DISC. VI. "thers;" nor is it more their duty, than it is their intereſt, to become ſuch.

The church, it may be ſaid, can ſubſiſt without the ſtate, or under oppreſſion and perſecution from it. True: the Chriſtian church ſo ſubſiſted for three hundred years; but in the mean time, it's members of all denominations were ſought out, and put to death, with all the variety of tortures, which the ingenuity of men, actuated by the malignity of evil ſpirits, could deviſe. If it ſhould ever ſeem good to God to bring us into a ſimilar condition, he would, we truſt, prepare us to endure it; but neither clergy nor laity, it is preſumed, can regard ſuch a condition as a deſirable one. The Greek church ſubſiſts, at this day, at Conſtantinople, under the ſceptre of Mahomet. But how does it ſubſiſt? Like the tree that had ſuffered exciſion, in the dream of the Chaldean monarch, it's root indeed remains in the earth, with a band of iron and braſs, and it is wet with the

the dew of heaven, until certain times ſhall have paſſed over it; at the expiration of which, it may come into remembrance before God, and again bud, and put forth it's branches, and bear fruit, for the ſhadow and ſupport of nations yet unknown. But at preſent, it's condition is certainly not to be envied, or coveted. DISC. VI.

As Chriſtians, let us therefore gratefully acknowlege the protection we receive. We are pilgrims, travelling through this world to another. The powers of the world muſt uſe us as they ſhall think proper, and it ſhall pleaſe God to permit them. Bad uſage we are to bear with patience; for good uſage it becomes us to be thankful. And if Iſraelites, when captives in Babylon, were enjoined by a prophet to pray for a heathen king, who had carried them into captivity, "that in his peace they might have peace;" how much more ought we to pray, in our own land, for our own prince, who adorns by his life the faith which by his office he ſtands engaged to defend; that ſo Chriſtian-

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ity, which is the religion of peace, may thrive and flouriſh in the ſoil natural to it! Continue to us, then, O Lord, we beſeech thee, Him whom thou haſt hitherto preſerved. "Grant the king a long life:" bleſs him in his perſon, in his actions, in his family, and in his people: make his days proſperous, and the cloſe of them, when it muſt come, honourable and comfortable; that, through thy grace and goodneſs, it may open for him an entrance into that kingdom, where only temptation ſhall ceaſe, and trouble ſhall be known no more.

DISCOURSE VII.

THE DUTY OF SELF-DENIAL.

MATT. XVI. 24.

Then ſaith Jeſus to his diſciples, If any man will come after me, let him DENY HIMSELF.

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"AN hard ſaying; who can hear it? "Has God then implanted appe- "tites and affections in me, only that I may "be at the trouble of croſſing and morti- "fying them? Has he ſpread pleaſures and "delights before me, for no other end than "that I may act the ſelf-tormentor all my "days, by abſtaining from them? It is a "conduct unreaſonable in itſelf, and diſ- "honourable to his nature. It cannot be.

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"I will go back, and walk no more with "the author of ſuch a religion as this."

Reflections like theſe will but too naturally ariſe in the uninſtructed or the ill-inſtructed mind, when paſſages are read from the Goſpel (and many ſuch paſſages there are) of a ſimilar import with that which has been ſelected for the ſubject of our preſent meditations. "To imagine (ſays a late "philoſopher) that the gratifying any of "the ſenſes, or the indulging any delicacy "in meats, drinks, or apparel, is of itſelf a "vice, can never enter into a head that is "not diſordered by the frenzies of a fanati-"cal enthuſiaſm." And we have ſeen the pen of a celebrated hiſtorian employed in repreſenting the primitive Chriſtians as a ſet of poor, moping, melancholy, miſerable fanatics, becauſe they obſerved the ſelf-denying precepts of their Saviour, inſtead of adopting the "elegant mythology of the Greeks," and the no leſs elegant manners of the Romans.

The

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The matter, therefore, deſerves a ſerious and diligent enquiry. The goodneſs of God forbids us to ſuppoſe that he would willingly grieve or afflict the children of men. Indeed, he himſelf aſſures us, that he never doth ſo. And he who has beſtowed on man the faculty of reaſon, can iſſue no commands which are not founded on the higheſt and moſt perfect reaſon—"He who formed the "eye, ſhall he not ſee?" It ſhall therefore be the deſign of the following diſcourſe to evince, that the divine wiſdom ſhines not forth more conſpicuouſly in any one precept of the Goſpel, than in this, whereby a man is enjoined to DENY HIMSELF.

The point ſhall be argued from the nature of man; from the nature of religion; from the influence exerted by the body upon the ſoul; from the many inſtances of ſelf-denial practiſed by the men of the world; and from the rewards annexed to the practice of it among Chriſtians.

In the firſt place, then, be it aſſumed as a

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principle, that human nature is in a ſtate of depravity and corruption. Man is not upright. His paſſions and affections do not naturally move in ſubordination to the higher principle within him, but are diſpoſed to rebellion. There are in his conſtitution certain irregular deſires, and evil propenſities, which are continually breaking forth into action. In the multitude of newſpapers daily publiſhed among us, there is not one but contains abundant evidence to ſatisfy the moſt ſceptical mind in this particular.

For *this* reaſon it is, that ſelf-denial is become, as it were, the form and ſubſtance of every virtue; for ſo far as we deny our natural corrupt tempers, ſo far we ſeem to advance in virtue. We are ſo far humble, for inſtance, as we deny ourſelves in the inſtances of pride; ſo far heavenly minded, as we deny our earthly inclinations; ſo far charitable, as we deny our tempers of ſelf-love and envy; ſo far temperate and pure, as we deny thoſe appetites, which, if indulged,

dulged, would render us otherwiſe; and thus every virtue ſeems to have it's chief foundation in the denial of ſome corrupt temper of our nature. The matter lies in a narrow compaſs. Were we upright and perfect, virtue would conſiſt in *following* our inclinations, becauſe thoſe inclinations would tend only to good; as we are fallen and depraved, virtue conſiſts in *denying* our inclinations, becauſe thoſe inclinations tend often to evil. DISC. VII.

Upon this principle it is, and becauſe the depravity of our nature begins to ſhew itſelf very early in operation, that children, as they cannot be made to underſtand the neceſſity of denying *themſelves*, unleſs we would ſee them ſpoiled and ruined, muſt be denied by *others*, who are about them, their parents, or governors. Syſtems of education, however differing in other reſpects, all centered here, till, ſome years ago, upon the continent, aroſe a genius brilliant as a comet, but, like that, eccentric and portentous! who ſurpriſed the world by advanc-

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ing, in ſubſtance and effect, the following propoſitions—"That no kind of habits "ought to be impreſſed on children: that "you ought never to teach them obedience, "as a duty: that you ſhould leave them to "the natural conſequences of their own "actions: and that, when reaſon comes to "exert itſelf in a maturer ſtate, all will be "right."—Should the experiment ever be tried in England, the event will only verify what has been predicted, in a beautiful apoſtrophe to the pupil of this new philoſopher, by an elegant writer of our own—"EMILIUS! How I tremble for thee, "while I ſee thee expoſed to the care of "thy too ingenious tutor! Fortunate wilt "thou be, if thou reacheſt the end of "thy fifth year! Nay rather, fortunate "wilt thou be, if thoſe accidents which "muſt inevitably attend thy ſituation, de-"prive thee of a life deſtined to future mi-"ſery from the ills of body and of mind, "contracted through this early and conti-"nued indulgence of thy infant caprices! "—I ſee thee wilful to thy parents, domi-

"neering

"neering in the nurſery; ſurfeiting on
"meats, burſting with liquids; inflaming
"thy body with noxious humours, thy
"mind with unquiet paſſions; running
"headlong into dangers which thou canſt
"not foreſee, and habits which thou canſt
"not eradicate; miſchievous to others, but
"fatal to thyſelf!"

In things of higher and more important concern, which reſpect not time but eternity, we are all in a ſituation too nearly reſembling that of *Emilius*, unleſs placed under the diſcipline of a better tutor. That tutor muſt be Religion; from the deſign of which ſhall be adduced a

Second argument in favour of ſelf-denial. Religion ſuppoſes the corruption of our nature, and is given to heal and reſtore it—a conſideration, which will carry us a ſtep farther into the nature of this evangelical duty. For the phyſician who undertakes to cure a diſeaſe, muſt of courſe, while he adminiſters proper medicines, enjoin his patient

to

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to abſtain from every thing (however pleaſing and agreeable) which may, in any degree, counteract thoſe medicines, and nouriſh the diſeaſe. The wiſdom and the kindneſs of the phyſician are manifeſted by the injunction, whatever the ſick man may, and through ignorance, frowardneſs, and peeviſhneſs, probably will, think to the contrary. It is eaſy therefore to conceive, that many indulgences, though in themſelves not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, perhaps, *vicious* or *immoral*, may yet be prohibited, as dangerous on account of the infirmity of our minds; for the ſame quantity of wine, which would be of no diſſervice to a perſon in health, might prove fatal to one in a fever. In this light human nature is conſidered (and ſurely with the utmoſt truth and propriety) by the Goſpel. We are fallen into a ſtate of ſin, and being ſo fallen, we find ourſelves in a fallen world, where, unleſs we are upon our guard, every thing around us will contribute to aggravate and inflame the diſtemper. Therefore are we, in *mercy*, commanded to abſtain. Chriſt came to deliver us from this

this ſtate of ſin and death, and to reſtore us to all thoſe tempers which may beſt prepare us for a ſtate of glory, with immortal ſpirits, in another and a better world to come. Now, what are thoſe tempers? Read the fifth chapter of St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, and ſee: —Humility, meekneſs, mourning, purity, heavenly-mindedneſs, righteouſneſs, peace, patience, reſignation, and joy in being counted worthy to ſuffer abuſe, ridicule, and perſecution, for our Saviour's ſake. We muſt renounce our religion, or acknowlege the excellency of theſe tempers, and the neceſſity of their being formed in us, that our Redeemer may pronounce us *Bleſſed*. If therefore we find ourſelves engaged in any habits of life, in a courſe of any indulgences and enjoyments, any pleaſures or diverſions, which prevent the formation of theſe tempers in us, and tend to ſtrengthen and confirm their oppoſites, in ſuch inſtances it will undoubtedly be expedient to practiſe ſelf-denial. When we return home in the evening, before we retire to our reſt, let us ſometimes, for the experiment's ſake, only

read

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read over the twelve firſt verſes of our Lord's ſermon on the mount, and obſerve how our minds ſtand affected toward them. If at any time we are in doubt concerning a particular employment, or amuſement, inſtead of enquiring nicely into the lawfulneſs of it, and whether there be in Scripture any ſpecial prohibition of it, the ſhorter and ſafer way is, to aſk oneſelf whether it be agreeable to the general ſpirit of Chriſtianity; whether it tend to beget and increaſe in us all the holy tempers of that divine religion, or to ſuppreſs and extinguiſh them?

To account for the ſtrictneſs of the Goſpel precepts, and the manners of the firſt Chriſtians, it is likewiſe to be obſerved, under this head, that if we would poſſeſs the power of ſelf-controul in things unlawful, we muſt ſometimes exerciſe it in things lawful; as he who wiſhes to avoid a fall from a precipice, if he be a prudent man, will not venture too near the verge of it. The deſires that have been ſuffered, upon all occaſions, to *reach* the line which ſepa-

rates

rates virtue from vice, will by a very ſmall temptation be ſeduced to *paſs* it. The Chriſtian ſoldier, like all others, muſt be put under the diſcipline of war in the time of peace, or, when the hour of actual ſervice arrives, he will be found greatly wanting. He who has accuſtomed himſelf to govern his thoughts and words, will eaſily govern his actions; and he who has learned at proper ſeaſons to abſtain, will find no difficulty in being temperate—It may be added, that he who has attained to temperance, has gone a great way towards the acquiſition of many other virtues.—This leads us to a DISC. VII.

Third reaſon upon which the doctrine of ſelf-denial is founded, namely, the influence which the body exerts upon the ſoul. So great and extenſive is this influence, that the fall of man ſeems to have conſiſted very much in the ſubjection of the ſoul to the power and dominion of the body; as the characteriſtic mark of his reſtoration through Chriſt is the reduction of the body under the power and dominion of the ſoul. For thus

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thus the Scriptures deſcribe the whole proceſs as a conteſt between the *fleſh* and the *ſpirit*, ending, after many ſtruggles and viciſſitudes, in the victory of the latter. "The corruptible body (ſays the wiſe man) "preſſeth down the ſoul, and the earthly "tabernacle weigheth down the mind." It muſt be our endeavour, as it is both our intereſt and our duty, to take off, as much as may be, this *preſſure*, and to diminiſh this *weight*. The body muſt have it's ſupplies, or the ſoul will loſe a good ſervant; but great care muſt be taken as to the quantity and quality of thoſe ſupplies, or it will acquire a very bad maſter. He who fares ſumptuouſly every day, and makes each meal a full and luxurious one, may, after any ſuch meal, feel the force and energy of the above cited deſcription—"The cor-"ruptible body preſſeth down the ſoul, and "the ea thly tabernacle weigheth down the "mind." The heat and heavineſs cauſed in the body by repletion induce, for the time, an uneaſineſs and dulneſs on the ſoul; nay, what is more extraordinary, even vitiate and deprave

deprave it's taſte. The intellectual, moral, or ſpiritual truths, which, after the light repaſt of the morning, were reliſhing as the patriarch's ſavoury meat, are now become taſteleſs as the white of an egg. The man has contracted a temporary indifference, at leaſt, if not an averſion, towards every thing that is wiſe, and great, and good. His faculties are not equal to any thing higher than a newſpaper, or a novel, or a converſation more trifling than either; and a very few ſentences in the religious way would infallibly ſend him to ſleep. In ſhort, there is not more difference between any two men, than between the ſame man, when full, and when faſting. DISC. VII.

To ſay, with a celebrated phyſician, that no Engliſhman has an idea of temperance, would be ſaying too much: but we ſhall ſay no more than the truth, perhaps, when we ſay, that moſt of us are frequently wanting in many degrees of that ſelf-denial which is ſo powerfully recommended and enforced upon us, by the preceding conſi-

deration,

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deration, and which would conduce no less to the health and comfort of our bodies, than to the improvement and welfare of our minds.

The reciprocal influence of the ſoul and body on each other, has been largely demonſtrated by modern philoſophers; but they have been far too haſty in concluding from thence, that the ſoul, as well as the body, is material. There are arguments ſufficient to evince them diſtinct beings, with different powers, though capable of exerting a mutual influence on each other. There is no abſurdity in ſuppoſing them ſo to do. That they cannot exert ſuch a mutual influence, allowing them to be diſtinct ſubſtances, is a negative, which never has been, nor ever can be proved. But an inference of great weight and importance to the conduct of mankind may be drawn from the circumſtance of this reciprocal influence, namely, that we ſhould labour, on the one hand, by temperance and abſtinence to preſerve the body in that ſtate which may produce a benign and kindly influence on the

ſoul;

ſoul; and, on the other, to fill the ſoul with ſuch ideas, ſentiments, and affections, as may produce a like benign and kindly influence on the body. In general the practice of mankind, alas, is exactly the reverſe. They indulge paſſions in the ſoul, which deſtroy the health of the body; and introduce diſtempers into the body, which clog and obſtruct the faculties of the ſoul. DISC. VII.

But the difficulties and hardſhips to be encountered in a courſe of ſelf-denial, it will ſtill be ſaid, perhaps, are very diſcouraging. The objection may be in ſome meaſure obviated by a

Fourth argument on it's behalf, deduced from the examples frequently ſet us by the men of the world.

Our bleſſed maſter has obſerved, that "the children of this world are in their "generation *wiſer* than the children of "light." It may be ſaid, with equal truth, that they have generally more *zeal*, more

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fortitude, more *patience*, and *perſeverance*. There is not a votary of wealth, pleaſure, power, or fame, who cannot, and who does not, upon occaſion, practiſe a ſelf-denial, which few Chriſtians can be prevailed upon to practiſe, in a much better cauſe; a ſelf-denial more ſevere and rigid indeed, than *they* are often called upon to practiſe.

For the ſake of collecting what is never to be uſed, and adding to his beloved heap, the miſer will forego the comforts, the conveniences, and almoſt the neceſſaries of exiſtence, and voluntarily ſubmit, all his days, to the penances and auſterities of a mendicant.

The diſcipline of a life in faſhion is by no means of the mildeſt kind; and it is common to meet with thoſe, who complain of being worn down, and ready to ſink under it. But how can they help it? What can they do? They are driven and compelled to it; they are faſt bound by the adamantine chains of a *neceſſity*—not *philoſophical*

ſophical indeed—but one equally inexorable and irreſiſtible. DISC. VII.

Conſider the vigils and the abſtinence of the gameſter. To diſcharge with propriety the duties of his profeſſion, it is expedient that he keep his habit cool, and his head clear. His diet is therefore almoſt as ſpare as that of St. *John* in the wilderneſs, and he drinks neither wine, nor ſtrong drink; leſt, inſtead of his cheating his friend, his friend ſhould cheat him.

Conſider the toil and the fatigue willingly undergone by one, whoſe delight is placed in the ſports of the field, and the pleaſures of the chaſe. How early does he riſe! How late is he abroad! "In hunger and thirſt, "in faſtings often, in cold and rain. None "of theſe things move him, neither counts "he his life dear unto himſelf," being well content often to put it to the extremeſt hazard.

Look at the aſpirant to power: He wears a countenance always ſuited to the preſent

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occaſion. No ſymptom of inward uneaſineſs is ſuffered to appear in it. He holds his paſſions in the moſt abſolute ſubjection. "Hitherto (ſays he to every one of them) "ſhalt thou come, but no farther." He takes patiently and cheerfully affronts and inſults. He bears and forbears. Can the *Stoic*, can the inhabitant of *le Trappe* do more? Exemplary inſtances of mortification and ſelf-denial are not confined to the deſart, or to the cloiſter. They may be found in a court.

How often does the candidate for literary fame purſue his propoſition, or his problem, or his ſyſtem, regardleſs of food and reſt, till his eyes fail, his nerves are ſhattered, his ſpirits are exhauſted, and his health is gone! But greater things than theſe are ſtill behind.

At the call of honour, a young man of family and fortune, accuſtomed to the gratifications of the table, and a life of eaſe and voluptuouſneſs, quits every valuable and tender

der connection at home, and ſubmits at once to all the painful duties and hard fare of a camp, in an enemy's country. He travels through dreary ſwamps, and inhoſpitable foreſts, guided only by the track of ſavages. He traverſes mountains, he paſſes and repaſſes rivers, and marches ſeveral hundred miles, with ſcarcely bread to eat, or change of raiment to put on. When night comes, he ſleeps on the ground, or perhaps ſleeps not at all; and at the dawn of day reſumes his labour. At length, he is ſo fortunate as to find his enemy. He braves death, amid all the horrors of the field. He ſees his companions fall around him—he is wounded, and carried into a tent, or laid in a waggon; where he is left to ſuffer pain and anguiſh, with the noiſe of deſtruction ſounding in his ears. After ſome weeks, he recovers, and enters afreſh upon duty.——And does the Captain of thy ſalvation, O thou who ſtyleſt thyſelf the ſoldier and ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt—does He require any thing like this, at thy hands? Or canſt thou deem him an auſtere Maſter, becauſe thou art DISC. VII.

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enjoined to live in ſobriety and purity, to ſubdue a turbulent paſſion, to watch an hour ſometimes unto prayer, or to miſs a meal now and then, during the ſeaſon of repentance and humiliation? Bluſh for ſhame, and hide thy face in the duſt.

More ſtrange and inexcuſable ſtill will this conduct of the Chriſtian appear, when we conſider, in the

Fifth and laſt place, the rewards annexed to the practice of ſelf-denial.

Many and great are it's advantages in the preſent life. The lightneſs of ſpirits, the cheerfulneſs of heart, the ſerenity of temper, the alacrity of mind, the vigour of underſtanding, the obedience of the will, the freedom from bad deſires, and the propenſity to good ones, produced by a prudent and judicious abſtinence, are inconceivable by thoſe who have never experienced them, and fully juſtify to thoſe who have experienced them the higheſt enco-

encomiums pronounced by the ancient fathers of the church on this evangelical precept, and the bleſſedneſs of obſerving it. For think not that the felicity, any more than the virtue, of man conſiſts in gratifying at all times his own humour, and following his own will; ſince his humour is perverſe, and his will depraved. We are, in very deed, the oldeſt of us, children, wayward children; and unleſs we would be miſerable, as well as vicious, we muſt treat ourſelves as we do our children. Now "compare the "child that is taught ſubmiſſion and obe- "dience, with him that is humoured in "every thing. How rational, cheerful, "agreeable, and happy is the one! How "ridiculous, peeviſh, diſagreeable, and un- "happy is the other! The ſmalleſt favour "done the firſt, is received and acknowleged "as a particular obligation: the greateſt "kindneſs done to the other, is either re- "jected with diſdain, or received with "thankleſs ill manners. The more you "ſtrive to pleaſe him, the more difficult "he is to be pleaſed; till at length nothing

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" will ſatisfy or oblige him, becauſe he hath
" been obliged in all things. — Betimes
" therefore accuſtom your deſires, like chil-
" dren, to *diſappointments*. Deny them
" every thing they aſk for, that is *improper*
" for them to obtain; nay, every thing
" (be it what it may) which they aſk for in
" an *improper manner*. This will be ſo far
" from ſouring the temper (as ſome have
" weakly ſuggeſted in the caſe of chil-
" dren) that it will give you, as well as
" them, a confirmed habit of acquieſcing
" in what is right; of cheerfully ſubmit-
" ting, when your wills are over-ruled; of
" receiving every thing with pleaſure and
" gratitude, in which you are indulged;
" above all, of controuling every ſudden paſ-
" ſion that may ariſe; of commanding and
" moderating every deſire; of reſigning to
" the appointments of Providence, through
" every ſituation and period of life." And
if this be not happineſs, ſay, where is it to
be found, and where is the place thereof?
—It is the happineſs of a hero, the joy
and the glory of a conqueror, returning
from

from the field of battle triumphant through grace, and dragging the enemies of his ſalvation faſt bound to his chariot-wheels. When ſelf-denial has thus wrought it's perfect work within you, the kingdom of heaven is there — and that kingdom is righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

But ſelf-denial will not only thus bring down heaven to you for a time — it will carry you up to heaven for ever. Let us revert to the fifth chapter of St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, and conſider well the promiſes there made to thoſe holy and happy tempers, peculiar to Chriſtianity, the eſſence of all which is ſelf-denial; and let us obſerve the manner in which the reward is adapted and appropriated to each ſeveral temper.

"Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit; for "theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Bleſſed "are they that mourn; for they ſhall "be comforted. Bleſſed are the meek; for "they ſhall inherit the earth. Bleſſed are "they

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"they which do hunger and thirſt after "righteouſneſs; for they ſhall be filled. "Bleſſed are the merciful; for they ſhall "obtain mercy. Bleſſed are the pure in "heart; for they ſhall ſee God. Bleſſed "are the peace-makers; for they ſhall be "called the children of God. Bleſſed are "they which are perſecuted for righteouſ-"neſs ſake; for theirs is the kingdom of "heaven. Bleſſed are ye, when men ſhall "revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall "ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſely, "for my ſake. Rejoice, and be exceeding "glad; for great is your reward in heaven."

The Saviour's promiſe is ſufficient—But would you hear the teſtimony of one who viewed it's accompliſhment? You ſhall hear it—

"I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, "which no man could number, of all "nations, and kindreds, and people, and "tongues, ſtood before the throne, and "before the Lamb, clothed with white "robes,

" robes, and palms in their hands, and " cried with a loud voice, Salvation to our " God which ſitteth upon the throne, and " unto the Lamb; bleſſing, and glory, and " wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour, " and power, and might, be unto our God, " for ever and ever. And one of the elders " anſwered, ſaying unto me, What are theſe " which are arrayed in white robes, and " whence came they? And I ſaid unto " him, Sir, thou knoweſt. And he ſaid " unto me, Theſe are they which came out " of great tribulation, and have waſhed " their robes, and made them white, in the " blood of the Lamb"—Theſe are the " poor in ſpirit, the mourners, the meek, " the merciful, the pure in heart, the " peace-makers, the afflicted, and the per- " ſecuted"—Theſe are they, who, in the days of their fleſh, " denied themſelves, " took up their croſs daily, and followed " Jeſus," in the way that leadeth unto life; that way, on which " the Lord hath " promiſed his *bleſſing*, even life for ever- " more."

VII.

DISCOURSE VIII.

THE DUTY OF TAKING UP THE CROSS.

LUKE IX. 23.

If any man will come after me, let him — take up his croſs daily, and follow me.

THAT inſtrument on which, among the Romans, malefactors were condemned to ſuffer an ignominious and painful death, became a ſign or ſymbol of all that is afflicting or tormenting, vexatious or diſagreeable, whether to the body or the mind of man. The utmoſt torture and anguiſh were expreſſed by the noun *cruciatus*, the infliction of them by the verb *crucio*.

As

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As the puniſhment alluded to was not in uſe among the Jews, they muſt have borrowed the expreſſions from the Romans; unleſs, as ſome learned men think, they had been received before from the Perſians, who, it is ſaid, were accuſtomed to fix criminals to ſome kind of croſs. Such application of the word is common, I believe, to moſt of the modern languages of Europe. In our own, we denote all events adverſe and unpleaſing by the general term of *croſſes*.

Since the time when the Son of God, by ſuffering on the croſs, for the ſins of the world, exalted it to a dignity above the thrones and diadems of princes, on which it was ſoon portrayed as their greateſt ornament and higheſt glory, the word became one of mighty import in the Chriſtian ſyſtem, of which the doctrine, diſcipline, and duties, all range under it's banner.

When our Lord pronounced the paſſage ſelected for my text, he, no doubt, intended

to

to ſignify by what death he himſelf ſhould die, and withal to intimate, that, beſides the manifold perſecutions his apoſtles were to undergo for his ſake, ſome of them ſhould even literally be conformed to him in the manner of their leaving the world; which accordingly came to paſs. It ſeems impoſſible to reflect upon this wonderful and characteriſtic circumſtance reſpecting the ever bleſſed Founder of our religion, as Grotius has well obſerved, without ſuppoſing that Plato muſt have been under a degree of divine impulſe, when he cloſed the account of his righteous man who ſhould appear, at ſome future day, upon the earth, by predicting, that, "after having "ſuffered all other ills, he ſhould, at "length, be *fixed to a croſs*."

To underſtand the phraſe of *taking up* and *bearing the croſs*, it muſt be recollected, that, upon the infliction of this puniſhment, the criminal was obliged to *take up the croſs*, and *bear it*, on his ſhoulders, to the place of execution.

Our

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Our Lord's declaration ſhall be conſidered, in the following diſcourſe, as general, and made to all his diſciples. We ſhall ſtate the grounds on which the duty is founded; and point out the manner in which it may beſt be performed.

It may appear difficult, at firſt ſight, to comprehend the goodneſs of God in afflicting us, or commanding us to afflict ourſelves. Could not he render us holy, without rendering us miſerable, by way of preparative? Doubtleſs he could have done it; and he could have produced all men, as he created the firſt man, at their full growth; but his wiſdom has ſeen it fit, that we ſhould paſs through the pains and hazards of infancy and youth, in the latter inſtance, and, in the former, that through tribulation and affliction we ſhould enter into his heavenly kingdom. It is his will; and therefore, though no reaſons could be aſſigned, ſilence and ſubmiſſion would beſt become us.—But there are many.

For

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For it is obvious to remark, in the firſt place, that Chriſtianity did not bring afflictions into the world with it; it found them already there. The world is full of them. The miſery of man is a theme on which philoſophers and hiſtorians, orators and poets, have expatiated, from age to age; nor is it yet by any means exhauſted. The wealthy and the great, the men of buſineſs and the men of pleaſure, have diſcovered no method of exemption. In every profeſſion, every ſtation, nay, in every individual, there is a ſomething, which, at times, damps all enjoyments, and embitters the cup of life. Men are diſquieted either by the tempers of others, or their own; by their ſins, or by their follies; by ſickneſs of body, or ſorrow of heart. Many, inſtead of becoming better by their ſufferings, are made worſe; they murmur, they rebel, they rage, they deſpair; and the torments of time lead on to thoſe of eternity. Such is the ſtate of things in the world. Let us reflect,

Secondly, how it came to be ſo, and we

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ſhall find ſtill leſs cauſe of complaint. The miſery of man proceeded not originally from God; he brought it upon himſelf. "God formed him upright;" and, while upright, happy; but he "ſought out "inventions," he followed his own imaginations, and became miſerable. What the wiſe man ſays of death, is equally true of affliction; "God made it not, neither "hath he pleaſure in the deſtruction," or the ſuffering, "of the living. For he "created all things, that they might have "their being; and the generations of the "world were healthful, and there was no "poiſon of deſtruction in them, nor the "kingdom of death upon the earth: for "righteouſneſs is immortal—But ungodly "men, with their works and words, called "it to them." You ſee how exactly this harmonizes with the doctrine of the Apoſtle; "death"—and, in like manner, trouble—"came upon all men, for that all had "ſinned." Whatever, therefore, our ſufferings may be, we ſuffer no more than we deſerve; we muſt bow down under the mighty

mighty hand of God; we muſt kiſs the rod, exclaiming, in the words of Nehemiah, "Thou art juſt, O Lord, in all that is "brought upon us; for thou haſt done "right, but we have done wickedly[a]." DISC. VIII.

The Scriptures inform us, that by one man's tranſgreſſion moral evil entered into the world; death, and every other kind of natural evil, entered with it. To find our way through all the mazes of that labyrinth of diſputation which the ſubject has occaſioned, may be difficult; to explain clearly and unexceptionably every particular in that conciſe hiſtory given us by Moſes, may not be eaſy: but the fact is ſufficient, related in the Old Teſtament, acknowleged and built upon in the New. And it is the only clue that can unravel, the only key that can open every thing. Graſp it firmly, and ſuffer no man, either by fraud or force, to wreſt it from you. Without it, all is dark and inexplicable. You will be driven,

[a] Nehem. ix. 33.

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either to deny there can be a wiſe and gracious God who governs the world, which is the madneſs of the Epicureans; or, to affirm that evil is good, which is the abſurdity of the Stoics.

But though it be moſt undoubtedly an abſurdity to call evil good, there is no abſurdity in holding, that good may be brought out of evil. Natural evil may be converted into a remedy for moral evil, which gave it birth. Sin produced ſorrow; and ſorrow may contribute, in ſome meaſure, to do away ſin. That the croſſes we meet, the pains and the troubles we ſuffer through life, are by the providence of God intended, and by his grace rendered effectual, for this purpoſe, ſhall be our

Third obſervation; and I am confident it will give full ſatisfaction and reſt to your minds, as touching the matter in diſcuſſion.

From what we feel in ourſelves, and what we ſee and hear of others, every perſon,

perſon, who has thought at all upon the ſubject, muſt have been convinced, that, circumſtanced as we are, "it is good for "us to be afflicted." Naturally, man is inclined to pride and wrath, to intemperance and impurity, to ſelfiſhneſs and worldly mindedneſs; deſirous to acquire more, and unwilling to part with any thing. Before he can enter into the kingdom of heaven, he muſt become humble and meek, temperate and pure, diſintereſted and charitable, reſigned, and prepared to part with all. The great inſtrument employed by heaven to bring about this change in him, is the croſs. Affliction will make him humble and meek, by ſhewing him how poor and weak a creature he is, and how little reaſon he has to be proud, or to be angry; it will render him temperate and pure, by withdrawing the fuel which has nouriſhed and inflamed baſe luſts; it will cauſe him to become diſintereſted and charitable, as teaching him, by his own ſufferings, to ſympathize with his ſuffering brethren, and to grant that relief, which he

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perceives himſelf to want; he will die to the world, which is already dead to him, and live to God, in whom alone he finds every bleſſing and comfort. Contented, and reſigned, he will have but one wiſh—"to depart, and to be with Chriſt."

Such is the proceſs which, at different times, and in different manners, muſt take place in us. The maladies to be healed are inveterate, and not without much difficulty eradicated. The proceſs therefore muſt be long, and it muſt be painful; but there is good reaſon for it; the corruption of our nature makes it neceſſary, and is the real cauſe of the pain we endure in the operation. The ſurgeon applies not the knife where the fleſh is ſound; but when it is otherwiſe, the application muſt be made, and made in proportion to the depth of the wound, and the danger of a mortification. In ſuch caſe, is it cruelty in him, when he cuts to the quick? No; it is affection, it is ſkill; it is the manner in which he would treat his only ſon. Does the father hate his child, whom

whom he chaſtiſes? No; it is the beſt proof he can ſhew of his love. So ſaith our heavenly Father of his children. "Whom "the Lord loveth he chaſteneth, and "ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth[b]." DISC. VIII.

In this light, then, are we to view the troubles of life; not only thoſe of the more notorious and heavier kind, as poverty and perſecution, ſickneſs, pain, and the loſs of perſons who are deareſt to us; but thoſe alſo which are of leſs moment, and paſs in ſecret, unobſerved by the world; the little rubs and vexations ariſing from the ingratitude and froward diſpoſitions of others, the conflict of paſſions in our own minds, or that languor, that *tædium vitæ*, as it is called, which deſtroys the reliſh of our enjoyments, and even of life itſelf. All theſe, which conſtitute the *daily* croſs mentioned in the text, are deſigned to cure the ſurfeit of proſperity; to intimate, that earth is not the ſeat of

[b] How finely is this touched by the hand of our great poet—

"Conſideration, like an angel, came,
"And whipt th' offending Adam out of him."

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unmingled and permanent happineſs, that here we have no abiding city, but expect, and ſhould ſeek after, one to come.

Nothing happens without the providence of God. Known unto him are all his works from the beginning. He created all, he governs all, and to every thing he has given to be what it is. He numbers the hairs of our heads, the leaves of the wood, the grains of ſand upon the ſhore, and the drops that compoſe the mighty ocean; each atom, at the creation, was meaſured and weighed by his eternal wiſdom. Acquainted with the ſtate and temper of every perſon, and having the whole chain of events before him, he has prepared a ſeries of them, to detach us, by degrees, from the world and from ourſelves; to train us, by a holy and ſalutary diſcipline, for better things; to hew and to poliſh us, as precious ſtones, that ſhall have place in his celeſtial temple. And he has allotted to every man *his* croſs, his own croſs, that croſs which is proper for him, and beſt calculated to effect in *him* ſo great

and

and beneficent a purpoſe. Let him firſt conſider what it is, and then "take it up, "and bear it." To point out in few words, the manner in which this may beſt be done, ſhall employ the remainder of our time. DISC. VIII.

When our Lord was led forth to be crucified, the Jews, we are told, laid hold on "one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the "country; and on him they laid the croſs, "that he might bear it after Jeſus." This ſtranger ſeems deſigned to appear, upon this occaſion, as the repreſentative of us all, exhibiting in his perſon, thus loaded with the croſs, or a part of it, the very ſame inſtruction conveyed by our Lord himſelf in the words of the text; "let him take up his "croſs, and follow me:" we are to follow him, to tread in his ſteps, and, conformed to his example in ſuffering, conform ourſelves to it likewiſe in the manner of bearing thoſe ſufferings.

The very conſideration, that we are following him, will direct us to do it as becomes

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comes us. Looking unto Jeſus, the author and finiſher of our faith, going before us, and ſuffering ſo much for us, himſelf perfectly innocent, we cannot think it much, that we ſhould ſuffer ſomething, who are in ſo many ways guilty. "If theſe things be "done to the green tree"—if the ax be laid to the root of the verdant and fruitful tree of life itſelf—"what ſhall be done to the "dry?" what can the ſapleſs and barren wood expect, but to be for burning and fuel of fire?

When a man groans under the iron rod of oppreſſion, or, caſt down upon the bed of ſickneſs, feels his bones to be filled with pain, and the multitude of his bones with ſtrong pain; when he endeavours to recollect ſome paſſage of Scripture, wherewith to ſolace and ſupport his weary ſoul; perhaps there is nothing that will cauſe more light and comfort to break in upon him, than frequently to repeat and medidate upon that humble acknowlegement, made by the poor penitent from the croſs on one ſide of his

his Saviour, and addreſſed to his reprobate companion on the other—"Doſt not thou "fear God, ſeeing thou art in the ſame con- "demnation? And we indeed juſtly; for "we receive the due reward of our deeds; "but THIS man hath done nothing amiſs." At this thought, Love of the Redeemer will ſpring up in his mind; and to Love nothing is irkſome; it will make "his yoke "eaſy, and his burden light." DISC. VIII.

In every path and every period of life, the croſs will meet us; it will be found lying before us: by mean compliances, by tranſgreſſing or neglecting our duty, we may turn out of the road, and avoid it; through wilful blindneſs and obſtinacy, we may ſtumble over it, and fall. Our Lord took up *his*, and bore it while ſtrength remained; let us do likewiſe.

It ſhould be borne in a ſpirit of ſubmiſſion and reſignation, without complaining or murmuring. "Attend to the rod, and to "him who hath appointed it;" conſider well the

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the latter, and you will entertain right ideas of the former. "The cup which my *Father* "hath given me, ſhall I not drink it?"— "Not *my* will, but *thine* be done."

Reſignation to God ſhould be accompanied with meekneſs towards men, who may be the inſtruments of our ſufferings, for they are only inſtruments, in the hands of their Maker and ours; and whether the inſtruments employed be animate or inanimate, a Chriſtian ſees it equally abſurd to diſcharge his anger againſt them. "Let him "alone, let him curſe, becauſe the Lord "hath ſaid unto him, curſe[c]," exclaimed David of Shimei. "Thou couldeſt have no "power at all againſt me, except it were "given thee from above," ſaid a greater than David to his unjuſt judge. Knowing this, therefore, "when he was reviled, he "reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he "threatened not; but committed himſelf to "him that judgeth righteouſly[d]." Spotleſs

[c] 2 Sam. xvi. 10. [d] 1 Pet. ii. 23.

and

and ſilent, he was led, a lamb, to the ſlaughter. DISC. VIII.

Meekneſs is not at all incompatible with fortitude, which is neceſſary to carry us through, that we may not faint in our minds, and fail, before the end of our ſufferings.—Behold the man! He comes forth with the purple robe, and the crown of thorns, into the midſt of the hoſtile and furious multitude, unmoved by the ſcoffs of apoſtate prieſts, and the inſults of an infidel rabble; undaunted by all the efforts of evil men and evil ſpirits; unappalled at the ſight of that croſs, on which he was to "taſte death for every man." He is mocked, ſpit upon, ſtripped, ſcourged, and nailed to the fatal tree. Patient and decided, firm and recollected, he commends his ſpirit to the Father, in words which recognized and ſubſtantiated an ancient prophecy concerning him; and then, as the laſt token of obedience, bows his head, and dies.

Charity is always glorious; but never appears

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pears more ſo, than when ſhining forth from a dark cloud of affliction; when it evinces, that our thoughts are not ſo engroſſed by our own ſufferings, as to forget thoſe of others; when we are not unmindful to perform the laſt kind offices to thoſe about us; when our lateſt breath is ſpent in comforting our relations and friends, and praying for our enemies. Thus the dying patriarchs of old called for their children, and left with them the monitions and benedictions of heaven: and thus He of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, to the women, who followed him wailing; "Daughters of Jeruſalem, weep not for "me, but weep for yourſelves and your "children"—to the bleſſed virgin, and the beloved diſciple, ſtanding under the croſs; "Woman, behold thy ſon—Behold thy "mother"—of the Jews, who crucified him; "Father, forgive them, for they know "not what they do."

Theſe are the virtues, theſe the triumphs of the CROSS!

But

But perhaps you will aſk, "Who is "ſufficient for theſe things?" The anſwer received by St. Paul, applies to every one of us; "My grace is ſufficient for thee." *That* will enable us to look, through "the "ſufferings of the preſent time," to the "glory that ſhall be revealed," and to wonder that we make any account of the one, while we believe in the other. Faith ſhews us heaven opened, and Jeſus, who was crucified, ſtanding at the right hand of the Majeſty there; it ſhews us a long and goodly train of thoſe who once carried their croſſes, but are "now crowned, and "receive palms from the Son of God, "whom they," formerly, *thus* "confeſſed "in the world."

It is ſaid of our bleſſed Lord himſelf, that "for the glory which was ſet before "him, he endured the croſs, deſpiſing the "ſhame," eſteeming both the pain and the ignominy as nothing, in reſpect to the reward that ſhould follow.

The

DISC. VIII.

The misfortune is, that, in viewing theſe objects, we hold the glaſs, and turn the perſpective; the joys of another world are driven off to a diſtance, and diminiſhed; the evils of this are brought near, and magnified. How much otherwiſe do things appear in the ſight of God! To us one day may ſeem a thouſand years: to him "a "thouſand years are but as one day." A little more, or a little leſs, of pain or pleaſure; a life longer or ſhorter, by a few years—are differences which diſappear at once in the preſence of eternity. Say, that, at ſome time within theſe laſt hundred years, two friends died, the one twenty years before the other. To the ſurvivor that interval ſeemed long and tedious: to us, now looking back upon the whole, it ſeems trifling; and more ſo to them: they are met again, and no trace of it is to be ſeen. A ſick man, who paſſes a night without ſleep, thinks that night to be without end; but the night, in reality, is no longer than another; and when it is gone, he himſelf will be convinced of it.

Life

Life rolls along like a torrent. The paſt is no more than a dream; the preſent, when we think we have faſt hold of it, ſlips through our hands, and mingles with the paſt; and let us not vainly imagine, that the future will be of another quality; it will glide by, with the ſame rapidity. You have ſeen the waves of the ocean preſſing each other to the ſhore. You then beheld an emblem of human life: days, months, and years, crowd forward, in like manner. Yet a little while, yet a few moments, and all will be at an end. "The things which "are ſeen are temporal; but the things "which are not ſeen are eternal." DISC. VIII.

DISCOURSE IX.

THE NECESSITY OF RISING WITH CHRIST.

COLOSS. III. 1, 2.

If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

THERE are few perſons who have not often employed their thoughts on the reſurrection of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt from the dead. The fact is extraordinary, and well atteſted; the circumſtances ſtriking and affecting. The trembling of the earth, the deſcent of the angel, the removal of the ſtone, the terror of the guard, and the different appearances of the

DISC. IX. Saviour to his diſciples; all inſpire a mixture of reverential awe, and heartfelt delight.

As a conſequence of this reſurrection, it naturally occurs to our minds, that ſince Chriſt is riſen, we ſhall ariſe too; becauſe he aroſe, that we might do the ſame. The members muſt be joined to the head; and the harveſt will of courſe follow the firſt fruits.

This is clear. But there is another conſequence, which perhaps may not ſo much and ſo frequently engage our attention as it ought to do. "I know," ſays Martha, ſpeaking of her dead brother—"I know that he "ſhall riſe again in the reſurrection at the "laſt day." We all can ſay this reſpecting our deceaſed friends and ourſelves. We are ready to ſay it. But what is to become of us; what is likely to be our portion, when we ſhall have thus riſen? For we may riſe either to ſalvation, or to condemnation. To eſcape the one, and obtain the other, ſome work

work muſt be wrought, ſome change muſt be effected in us, before we die; which in Scripture is likewiſe deſcribed as a reſurrection. The Apoſtle, you have heard in the text, addreſſing his Coloſſian converts in this ſtyle; "If ye then be riſen with "Chriſt." But how "riſen with Chriſt?" They had not been dead, and therefore they could not have riſen from the dead. *That* reſurrection, the reſurrection of the body, was not paſt; it was not to come for many ages: it is not yet come. The reſurrection intended was to take place in perſons that were living upon earth. This intermediate link of the chain we are but too apt to leave out in our calculations; or, at leaſt, to think very ſlightly and ſparingly of it, though it be indeed of the utmoſt importance. For what will it avail us to riſe from the dead, only to hear the ſentence, "Depart from "me ye wicked?"

Often have we beſtowed ſome reflections on the information communicated by the Goſpel of the day concerning that which

DISC. IX. has been done *for* us: let us at this time employ our meditations on the direction given us by the Epiſtle, as touching that which is to be done *in* us. Let us take into conſideration the *nature* of the change ſpoken of under the idea of a reſurrection; the *evidence* of it in the transfer of our affections; and the *objects* on which thoſe affections are to be placed.

I. "If ye then be riſen with Chriſt"—The words evidently imply, that, in conſequence of Chriſt's reſurrection, ſome operation had been already wrought, ſome change had already paſſed upon the perſons here addreſſed; an operation and a change, bearing ſome reſemblance, ſome analogy to thoſe which had been wrought and paſſed in the body of our Lord: "If ye be RISEN "with Chriſt;" if ye have riſen from the dead, together with him.—Now, ſince no ſuch change had as yet paſſed on their bodies, the change intended muſt have paſſed upon the other part of their compoſition, their ſouls; *theſe* muſt, in ſome ſenſe, have

have riſen from the dead; previouſly to which, they muſt have been in a ſtate of death, or they never could have riſen from the dead. DISC. IX.

The very mention of the words *dead*, and *death*, has, doubtleſs, already brought to your remembrance ſeveral paſſages in Holy Writ, where expreſſions of a like ſort occur: "—You being dead in your ſins; dead in "treſpaſſes and ſins; ſhe that liveth in "pleaſure is dead, while ſhe liveth; ariſe "from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee "light;" with many others.

Nothing can paint in ſtronger colours the nature of ſin, than do theſe texts, which, by ſtyling it *death*, lead us neceſſarily to conceive of the one by the other. The ſinner, like the dead man, neither ſees, nor hears, nor taſtes, nor feels, as he ought to do, were he alive to God, and had he his "ſenſes "exerciſed to diſcern good and evil:" he is incapable of motion and action, in a moral acceptation of the terms, that is, of making

DISC. IX. any progreſs toward heaven, or performing any good upon earth: "neither is there any "breath in his mouth;" the Spirit of the Almighty has forſaken him, and he is become, as it were, a corpſe, fit only to be carried forth, and laid in the pit of darkneſs and corruption.—Such, in the ſight of God, is the greateſt, and the richeſt, and the gayeſt, and the wittieſt, and the wiſeſt man of the world, without religion; buried in ſenſuality and unbelief: he lieth in the grave, death gnaweth him, and the worm that never dieth is feeding upon him.

Now to raiſe ſuch an one from the dead, to reſtore him to life; to cauſe him to ſee the things which belong to his peace, the ſun of righteouſneſs, and the glories of his throne; to hear the words of eternal ſalvation; to taſte the good things of the world to come; to feel the terrors of judgment, and the comforts of mercy; to inſpire into him the breath of heaven, that he may ſpeak in purity, in truth, and in charity, as "the Spirit gives him utterance;" to call

him

him forth, like *Lazarus* in his grave-clothes, that he may walk in the way of God's commandments, and ſit down at the table with his Lord—this is a work, which requires power more than human. Thus to riſe *with* Chriſt, can be granted only *by* Chriſt. DISC. IX.

And, indeed, to procure it, was the deſign of his exaltation on the croſs; "I, if I be "lifted up, ſaid he (ſignifying what death "he ſhould die), will draw all men unto "me." The virtue of his death, and the conſequent "power of his reſurrection" (as the Apoſtle ſtyles it) compoſe a divine magnetical influence (if one may uſe the expreſſion) which is to act upon the maſs of mankind, and draw them upwards from the earth. It acts, in a due and appointed order, firſt upon their ſouls, and afterwards upon their bodies. The ſoul, a native of heaven, had it continued pure and upright, as it came from the hands of the Creator, would ſtill have looked and wiſhed to return thither. But an alteration happened, which

is

DISC. IX. is wonderfully marked in that line of the heathen ſatyriſt—

O CURVÆ in *terras* animæ, et *cæleſtium* inanes!

The human mind has been warped from it's original attitude, bent and bowed down to the love and care of earthly things, and rendered deſtitute of noble and heavenly thoughts and aims. This is the ſpiritual death of the Scriptures, which has induced the neceſſity of a ſpiritual reſurrection. And as the death of the body flowed from the ſame ſource of original tranſgreſſion, a reſurrection of *that* likewiſe muſt follow in due time. "This is the will of him that "ſent me, that every one which ſeeth the "Son, and believeth on him, may have "everlaſting life, and I will raiſe him up "at the laſt day[a]." By the union of body and ſoul, it was not intended, that the former ſhould depreſs the latter, but that the latter ſhould exalt the former. The reſurrection of the one from ſin to righte-

[a] John vi. 40.

ouſneſs,

ouſneſs, is ſucceeded by that of the other from death to life eternal: and thus it is, that the Saviour completely fulfils his promiſe; "When I am lifted up, I will draw "all men unto me." That we ſhould firſt "riſe with Chriſt," in the ſenſe which has now, it is hoped, been ſufficiently explained, is, you ſee, a neceſſary and leading point. We are next to conſider the ſign and proof of ſuch our reſurrection. DISC. IX.

II. A change of this kind being of ſo much conſequence, it muſt be a deſirable thing for us to learn, on what evidence we may reſt aſſured, that ſuch a change has paſſed upon us. On this head we are inſtructed by the words following; for whether they be rendered, as our tranſlators have rendered them, in the imperative—"Seek thoſe "things which are above," or, as they may be rendered, in the indicative, "Ye do ſeek "thoſe which are above," it will come to the ſame. He who is riſen with Chriſt, ſeeks, or ought to ſeek, the things which are

DISC. IX. are above; it will be the effect, it will be the proof, of ſuch his reſurrection.

For to "ſeek," or make ſearch, implies, 1. that a perſon is alive. A dead man, as he knows nothing, can deſire nothing; and as he deſires nothing, he can ſeek after nothing.

2. It implies not only life, but motion, the ſure ſign and exertion of life. No one who is alive and awake, will continue motionleſs, as if he were dead: the ſame ſpirit which cauſes him to live, will excite him to move. When the Apoſtle ſays, "In him "(that is in God) we live," he adds immediately, "and move." The Chriſtian life is not a life of indolence: *that*, if it be not death, is the way that leads to it. A true Chriſtian is active and zealous, always thinking, ſpeaking, or performing ſomething for the honour of God, or the good of man. But,

3. Seeking, or making ſearch, if done as it ſhould

ſhould be, with a deſire and reſolution to *find*, implies more than mere motion and activity; it implies labour, diligence, perſeverance. Nothing valuable is to be obtained without theſe, even in the preſent world; much leſs are the wonders and the rewards of eternity. It is poſſible to ſeek as Pilate did, who aſked, "What is truth?" but never waited for an anſwer. We may ſeek careleſsly; or begin well, and in a little time grow weary, and give over; or we may ſeek in a formal manner, without love of that which is ſought: and therefore a ſearch in earneſt, and one that deſerves the name, implies,

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4. A reliſh and affection for the thing ſought, which cannot be poſſeſſed by a perſon who is dead. After that which we do not affect, we ſhall never long take the trouble to ſeek. Our Apoſtle to the words, "Seek thoſe things which are above," ſubjoins, "Set your affections on things above, "not on things on the earth." The Greek word here uſed for, "ſet your affections,"

is

DISC. IX. is one of very extenſive meaning: "it com-
"prehends the actions and operations both
"of the *underſtanding* and the *will*;" and cannot be fully tranſlated by any one Engliſh word; φρονειτε[b], *ſapite, underſtand, mind, reliſh, affect*, thoſe things which are above. Wiſdom, which is the mental faculty of rightly diſcerning and diſtinguiſhing between one thing and another, reſembles that bodily ſenſe reſiding in the palate, and perceiving the different taſte and flavour of the various kinds of food; and it is very obſervable, that in the three languages of *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and *Latin*, the ſame term is uſed for both; חכם in the firſt, φρονεω in the ſecond, *ſapere* in the laſt. "Set your affec-
"tions on things which are above;" acquire ſuch a knowlege of them, as may incite you to reliſh, to regard, to attend, to ſearch after them more and more, as the objects of your love, deſire, and affection. All this complication of meaning ſeems involved in the one word, φρονειτε. And therefore how diligent and induſtrious, how ardent and perſevering

[b] LEIGH in PARKHURST.

ought

ought we to be in the ſearch thus enjoined by the Apoſtle! Certainly the men of the world ſhould never be ſuffered to outſtrip and put us to the bluſh, by their purſuits after honour, pleaſure, or wealth. Beautiful is the exhortation of the wiſe man: which each perſon may regard, as if addreſſed to himſelf: "My ſon, if thou wilt receive my words, "and hide my commandments with thee; ſo "that thou incline thine ear to wiſdom, and "apply thine heart to underſtanding; yea, if "thou crieſt after knowlege, and lifteſt up "thy voice for underſtanding; if thou ſeekeſt "her as ſilver, and ſearcheſt for her as for-"bidden treaſures; then ſhalt thou under-"ſtand the fear of the Lord, and find the "knowlege of God [c]."

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We ſhall be greatly quickened in this our ſearch, if we conſider the Apoſtle's account of the things to be ſought, or the objects of our ſearch, namely, "the things above, "where Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of "God."

[c] Prov. xi. 1, 2.

III. To

DISC. IX. III. To be exalted above others in place and power upon earth, is the too general wiſh of all. From the parabolical diſcourſe of Jotham we learn, that even the bramble was not exempt from it. And during the abode of Chriſt upon earth, we read of one, who deſired for her two ſons, that they might ſit, one on the right hand, the other on the left, in his temporal kingdom, which was then imagined to be near it's eſtabliſhment. Such, however, was not the nature of our Lord's kingdom, or of the promotion to be obtained in it. He himſelf is ſeated at the right hand; but it is "the right hand "of the Majeſty in the *heavens*;" thither muſt his diſciples look for their exaltation. We may ſay of the Creator, in a more elevated ſenſe than that intended by the Latin poet,

Os homini *ſublime* dedit, *cœlumque* tueri
Juſſit——

This is a holy ambition, to which no bounds need to be ſet; worthy a princely progeny, a royal race, the ſons of God, thoſe eagles, that can aſcend the heights of the ſky, and con-

contemplate the brightneſs of the meridian ſun. "Why ſeek ye the living among the "dead?" Our Lord, our Redeemer, the object of all our hope, and all our delight, "is not "*here*; he is riſen; he is gone up on high;" he is upon his throne; he "ſitteth at the "right hand of God."

The attitude denotes *Reſt*; the place, *Honour*. And what can we wiſh for more than theſe?

The attitude, that of *ſitting*, denotes *Reſt*. Such it was to our bleſſed Lord himſelf. His life on earth was a life of labour; he looked not for reſt till his labours were at an end. His days were paſſed in going about to do good among men; his nights, in thinking of them, and praying for them: often indeed he "had not where to lay his "head." By taking our nature upon him, he ſubmitted to it's inconveniences and troubles, it's ſorrows and it's pains: he laboured, and then he reſted from his labours.

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In time we ſhall do the ſame: but the time is not yet. The ſad effects and conſequences of ſin are ſtill in the world, and lie heavy upon it. "The whole creation "groaneth and travaileth in pain together "until now;" and we groan and travail with it: we ourſelves, though redeemed by Chriſt, and favoured with his grace, that we may be enabled to ſupport our miſeries; we have, and upon earth ever ſhall have, miſeries to ſupport, and thoſe miſeries increaſing, as we draw nearer to our diſſolution. All things are full of labour and ſorrow, without us, and within us: without are the inceſſant toils of life, the hurry and the buſtle of the world; within are cares and fears: buſineſs fatigues mankind much; but when they have no buſineſs, they ſuffer more from their own thoughts. Their purſuits are often vanity, their diſappointments produce vexation; and from the conſideration of both, how many daily become a prey to gloom and melancholy!

On theſe, and many other accounts, which need

need not be mentioned (for experience will too ſoon teach the youngeſt among you) the ſtate of a Chriſtian in this life is by the Scriptures repreſented under that of a mariner in a tempeſt, longing for a ſight of the haven; of a ſoldier in camp, deſiring to hear of peace, and to receive a final diſcharge from his warfare; of a labourer, bearing in the field the burden and heat of the day, waiting impatiently for the cool and comfortable evening, which ſhall releaſe him, and ſend him home to quiet and repoſe. Hence the great object pointed out to us is *reſt*: we are directed to conſider, and derive conſolation and encouragement, during our labours, from the conſideration of that reſt of God himſelf, after his work of creation; that of his people in Canaan, after their ſojournings in the wilderneſs; and that of Chriſt, after his toilſome life, and painful death. We are aſſured, there ſtill *remaineth a reſt*, the fulneſs and accompliſhment of all others, for the people of God in heaven, when their labours likewiſe ſhall have been terminated upon earth. And we hear, un-

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DISC. IX. der both Teſtaments, the aſpirations of holy perſons after it, complaining that they dwell with Meſech; that their ſojournings are prolonged; praying for the wings of a dove, that they may fly away to it; deſiring to depart, and to be with Chriſt; weary of things, even the beſt things, below; and ſeeking earneſtly the things above, where he *ſitteth*.

Let us not, however, when we think of this reſt, think of it as a mere negative ſtate, as a ſtate of dull ſleep and inſenſibility. It is a reſt attended with pleaſure; the reſt of a weary flock, in green paſtures, beſide the waters of comfort; Eden blooms anew, with it's Tree and it's rivers; the Lamb leads his followers to living fountains of waters—of waters flowing from the throne of God, and conſequently impregnated with all the bleſſings and glories of eternity.

I ſay *glories*, as well as bleſſings; for as the attitude in which our Lord is deſcribed by the Apoſtle, that of *ſitting*, denotes

Reſt;

Reſt; by the place, "the right hand of "God," is denoted *Honour*: the former promiſes the bleſſings of his peace; the latter, the glories of his kingdom.

Reſt and honour, among men, are not often companions. Diſquietude attends height of character, rank, and ſtation, both in the purſuit, leſt it ſhould not be attained, and in the poſſeſſion, leſt it ſhould be loſt again. But of the honour which cometh from God this cannot be ſaid. It is always beſtowed on the penitent, the humble, and the faithful ſervant of his heavenly maſter; and when beſtowed, can no more be taken from him. The crown is immortal as the donor of it. "When the breath of man," on which depends all ſublunary fame, "goeth "forth, he turneth again to his earth; and "then, all his thoughts"—thoſe of the giver, as well as thoſe of the receiver—"periſh. "Bleſſed therefore is he," and he only, "who hath the God of Jacob for his help, "and whoſe hope is in the Lord, his God."

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To deſcribe the bleſſings of reſt and peace in the kingdom of our Lord, images are borrowed from the ſcenes of rural and paſtoral life. To give us ideas of it's glories, it's majeſty and magnificence — a throne is ſet in heaven, encompaſſed by a rainbow; and one is ſeen upon it, like a jaſper or a ſardine; ſeven lamps burn before it; lightnings and thunders proceed from it: four and twenty venerable perſonages appear clothed in white; they riſe from their ſeats, and fall proſtrate at the foot of the throne; when a chorus is heard of all creatures both in heaven and earth, ſinging glory to the Lamb triumphant! — Elſewhere, a city is exhibited, new Jeruſalem, built of gold and precious ſtones; that is, in the prophetical language of *Iſaiah*, it's walls ſalvation, and it's gates praiſe; the Lord God and the Lamb conſtitute it's temple; from whence it is illuminated by a ſplendor, far exceeding, and rendering needleſs, the light of the ſun and of the moon; the ſtreets reſounding with the hallelujahs of it's bleſt inhabitants.

Theſe

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Theſe are ſome of "the things above," on which the Apoſtle exhorts us to "ſet our "affections." I am ſure, you all think them worthy of your very beſt and warmeſt affections. May the conſideration of them produce that effect, which a *due* conſideration of them *muſt* produce. May they who have neglected to ſeek them—if any ſuch there be—now begin to ſeek them; and they who have always ſought them, now ſeek them ſtill more; thus receiving in themſelves this moſt comfortable teſtimony, that they are "riſen with Chriſt;" that their bodies, at the appointed time, ſhall ariſe; and both body and ſoul aſcend to heaven after him, that "where he is, they may be alſo."

DISCOURSE X.

THE CHRISTIAN RACE.

1 COR. CHAP. IX. PART OF VERSE 24.

So run, that ye may obtain.

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MOST important was the *matter* by the Apoſtles communicated to the world; the heavenly reward, and the way to obtain it. The *manner* of communication well deſerves your notice and attention. It is not done in the dry didactic ſtyle. There is nothing dull and heavy. All is ſpirit, and all is life. Their ideas are clothed in ſuch figures, as at once convince the underſtanding, ſtrike the imagination, warm the heart, and excite the affections.

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affections. It is impoſſible to continue cold and indifferent, while we read their epiſtles. They look around on the various ſcenes of life, and the cuſtoms that prevail among thoſe to whom they write. From theſe they ſelect images calculated to convey with effect to the minds of their diſciples, the doctrines which they wiſh to impreſs.

"The moſt ſplendid ſolemnities which "ancient hiſtory hath tranſmitted to us, "were the Olympic games. Hiſtorians, "orators, and poets, abound with refe- "rences to them; and their ſublimeſt "imagery is borrowed from theſe renown- "ed exerciſes. The games were ſolem- "nized every fifth year by an infinite con- "courſe of people from almoſt all parts of "the world. They were obſerved with "the greateſt pomp and magnificence: "hecatombs of victims were ſlain in ho- "nour of the heathen deities, and Elis was "a ſcene of univerſal feſtivity and joy. "We find that the moſt formidable and

"opulent

"opulent ſovereigns of thoſe times were "competitors for the Olympic crown. We "ſee the kings of Macedon, the tyrants of "Sicily, the princes of Aſia Minor, and at "laſt the lords of imperial Rome and em-"perors of the world entering their names "among the candidates, and contending "for the envied palm; judging their feli-"city completed, and the career of all "human glory and greatneſs happily ter-"minated, if they could but interweave "the Olympic garland with the laurels "they had purchaſed in the fields of "war[a]." DISC. X.

No ſubject could be more familiar than this was to the minds of the Corinthians, who were beſides ſo often ſpectators of ſimilar games, celebrated upon the Iſthmus on which their city was ſituated, and from thence denominated *Iſthmian*. With the greateſt propriety therefore the verſe, of which my text is a part, is introduced by

[a] Dr. HARWOOD's *Introduction to the Study and Knowlege of the New Teſtament*, vol. ii.

the

DISC. X. the words, *Know ye not*—"Know ye not "that they which run in a race run all, "but one receiveth the prize? So run, "that ye may obtain." For every citizen in Corinth was perfectly acquainted with each minute circumſtance of this ſolemnity; a ſolemnity every way ſo ſplendid and pompous, that there was no danger leſt the alluſions made to it in this and other parts of the apoſtolical writings, ſhould appear low and degrading. To unfold and diſplay to you the truths and duties inveloped in ſuch alluſions, ſhall be the buſineſs of the following diſcourſe, in the proſecution of which I ſhall be often obliged, and therefore here make my acknowlegements, once for all, to the afore-cited ingenious writer.

Let us therefore obſerve, in the firſt place, that the compariſon evidently intimates the Chriſtian life to be a ſtate of action, of ſtrenuous, unremitted, unwearied action.

The candidates, who were to engage in the

the *ſtadium*, were brought to the barrier. There, duly arranged, they waited, in all the exceſſes of ardour and impatience, for the ſignal. When it was made, at once they ſprung forward, and it is natural to imagine, with what rapidity they would urge their courſe, and ſtretch every nerve to reach the goal. DISC. X.

How finely does this circumſtance illuſtrate that ſublime paſſage in the Epiſtle to the Philippians[b]—"Not as though I had "already attained, either were already per- "fect; but I follow after, if I may appre- "hend that for which alſo I am appre- "hended of Chriſt Jeſus. Brethren, I "count not myſelf to have apprehended: "but this one thing I do, forgetting thoſe "things which are behind, and reaching "forth unto thoſe things which are be- "fore, I preſs towards the mark." Τα μεν οπισω επιλανθανομενος, τοις δε εμπροσθεν επεκτεινομενος, επι σκοπον διωκω, επι το βραβειον. Every term here employed by the

[b] Ch. iii. 12—14.

apoſtle

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apoſtle is *agoniſtical*; and the whole paſſage beautifully repreſents that ardour which fired the combatants, when engaged in the race.

Thus again, in the Epiſtle to the Hebrews—"Let us run with patience the "race that is ſet before us, τον προκειμενον "ημιν αγωνα."—Like thoſe who ran in the Grecian ſtadium, let us urge our courſe, with unremitting ardour, towards the deſtined happy goal.

Once more, in the ſecond Epiſtle to Timothy, ch. iv. v. 7; "I have fought a "good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe; "τον αγωνα τον καλον ηγωνισμαι, τον δρομον "τετελεκα."

Life then is a conteſt, a conflict, a race, a progreſs from one degree of wiſdom and goodneſs to another; from the virtues of childhood to thoſe of youth; from the virtues of youth to thoſe of manhood; from the virtues of manhood to thoſe of old

old age; even till, at the near proſpect of our diſſolution, we can ſay, each of us, with the apoſtle, "I have fought a good "fight, I have finiſhed my courſe." We muſt ſeek for reſt and repoſe only in the arms of victory. While the race laſts, it is not a time to ſlumber and ſleep, to loiter and be idle. Our competitors will paſs us, and we ſhall loſe all. Forgetting what is behind, we muſt ſtill, ſtill preſs forward, applying to ourſelves in one caſe, what was ſaid of a great commander in another, DISC. X.

Nil actum reputans, ſi quid ſupereſſet agendum.

Day by day we ſhould improve; day by day we ſhould examine ourſelves, whether we have improved; what additional knowlege we have acquired, what additional good we have done: how we have performed our duty to our neighbour, to ourſelves, to God that created and redeemed us, in public and in private. Upon theſe reviews, if carefully and faithfully made, how often ſhould we find occaſion to exclaim with that emperor, who, as a poet of

our

DISC. X. our own obſerves, had been one without his crown, *Amici, diem perdidi!*

The grand object, in ſhort, under this head, is to warn you againſt the curſe (and there cannot be a greater) of doing nothing; againſt the encroachments of that moſt fruitleſs and wretched of vices, *indolence*, whoſe reign, when once eſtabliſhed, is generally for life; and the lamentable condition of whoſe unhappy votaries is thus deſcribed in a viſion, by an elegant and maſterly pen.

"There were ſome whoſe crime it was "rather to neglect reaſon than to diſobey "her; and who retreated from the heat "and tumult of the way, not to the bowers "of intemperance, but to the maze of in- "dolence. They had this peculiarity in "their condition, that they were always in "ſight of the road, always wiſhing to re- "turn, and always reſolving to return to- "morrow. In theſe was moſt eminently "conſpicuous the ſubtlety of habit, who "hung

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" hung imperceptible ſhackles upon them,
" and was every moment leading them
" farther from the road, which they always
" imagined they had the power of reach-
" ing. They wandered on from one dou-
" ble of the labyrinth to another, with the
" chains of habit hanging ſecretly upon
" them, till, as they advanced, the flowers
" grew paler, and the ſcents fainter. They
" proceeded in their dreary march with-
" out pleaſure in their progreſs, yet with-
" out power to return; and had this
" aggravation above all others, that they
" were criminal, but not delighted. The
" drunkard for a time laughed over his
" wine; the ambitious man triumphed in
" the miſcarriage of his rival; but the
" captives of indolence had neither ſupe-
" riority nor merriment. Diſcontent low-
" ered in their looks, and ſadneſs hovered
" round their ſhades; yet they crawled on
" reluctant and gloomy, till they arrived at
" the depth of the receſs, varied only with
" poppies and nightſhade, where the domi-
" nion of indolence terminates, and the

DISC. X. "hopeleſs wanderer is delivered up to me-
"lancholy: the chains of habit are riveted
"for ever; and melancholy, having tor-
"tured her priſoner for a time, conſigns
"him at laſt to the cruelty of deſpair."—
But let us ariſe and go hence; let us leave the ſhocking ſcene; let us never forget that the Chriſtian life is a ſtate of activity, that we are to ſtrive, to run: and let us proceed to conſider, in the

Second place, the qualifications neceſſary for our ſucceſs, the diſcipline that muſt fit us for the race, that muſt enable us to go through it with vigour, and to finiſh it with joy.

It was indiſpenſably neceſſary that the candidates in the Grecian ſtadium ſhould previouſly ſubmit to a ſevere regimen, and preparatory exerciſes, regulated and directed by a number of illuſtrious perſons, appointed daily to ſuperintend them. Many paſſages from the ancient writers will occur to your memories. That of Epictetus perhaps

haps is moſt full and in point. "You "would conquer at the Olympic games— "You muſt conform to rules; ſubmit to "a diet, refrain from dainties; exerciſe "your body, whether you chooſe it or not, "at a ſtated hour, in heat and cold. In a "word, you muſt give yourſelf up to your "maſter, as to a phyſician[c]." Thus the body was to be purified and lightened by ſtrict temperance, braced by exerciſe, hardened by being inured to the changes of the atmoſphere; when the day came, the aſpirant was to be freed from ſuch garments as might incumber or intangle him; and to obſerve the laws and rules recited by the herald before the games began. DISC. X.

To us who are engaged in the Chriſtian race St. Paul applies the firſt of theſe particulars in the words immediately following thoſe of my text; "So run, that ye "may obtain." If any aſk, how, and in what manner? "He that ſtriveth for the

[c] Epict. Arrian. iii. 15.

DISC. X. "maſtery is temperate in all things." The Apoſtle ſtrengthens his precept by propoſing his own example; "I therefore ſo "run, not as uncertainly"—ουκ ως αδηλως—not as one unprepared to diſtinguiſh himſelf in public, as one preluding only in private, not yet trained and fitted for the conflict: "ſo fight I, not as one that beateth the air," in a previous fictitious combat with mine own ſhadow; "but I keep under my body," υπωπιαζω, contundo, ſugillo, I deal blows in earneſt, that do execution; "and bring "it into ſubjection" δουλαγωγω, lead it captive with all it's appetites, obedient to my better part, my mind; and all this I do, "leſt that by any means, when I have "preached to others," αλλοις κηρυξας, proclaimed to others the laws and the rewards, like the herald at the Olympic games, "I "myſelf ſhould be a caſtaway"—αδοκιμος, diſapproved; be rejected as unworthy; come off without honour and approbation.

Nothing can be ſtronger or more forcible upon the ſubject than this paſſage. "He "that

" that ſtriveth for the maſtery is temperate DISC.
" in all things." Otherwiſe, he will never X.
ſtrive long, or to any purpoſe, in the conflicts to which he is expoſed. At all times and in all circumſtances, " the cor-
" ruptible body in ſome degree preſſeth
" down the ſoul;" how much more, when itſelf is oppreſſed with a load of meats and drinks! The time loſt by ſitting too long at the table is matter of ſome conſideration; but this is not all: the mind becomes indiſpoſed towards any rational, manly, noble employment, for many hours afterward; perhaps, till the fumes of an intemperate meal ſhall have been carried off by a night's reſt. When we are told that " the people
" ſate down to eat and to drink," the next information we receive concerning them is, that they " roſe up to play;" to ſomething trifling and frivolous, at beſt; but, probably, to ſomething much worſe; to ſomething baſe and vicious, intemperance having awakened every other corrupt appetite and evil paſſion dormant in the heart of man. Daily experience evinces the truth of what is

DISC. X. here advanced. There is no perſon who has not often perceived and lamented the difference he has found in himſelf, when cool and ſprightly at one part of the day, and when heated and ſtupified at another. Believe it, and let it ſink deep in your minds—"He that ſtriveth for the maſtery," either as an Academic, or a Chriſtian, either in the proſecution of learning, or his advancement in religion, if he wiſhes to ſucceed, "muſt be temperate in all things." It was not more neceſſary for a candidate in the Grecian games to be ſo, than it is for him. And if an Apoſtle of our Lord, one not a whit behind the chief of them, with all his gifts and graces, thought that, without a ſtrict and conſtant adherence to this diſcipline, he was not ſafe, but after converting the nations, might himſelf be loſt; what are we, that we expect by any other means to ſecure our ſalvation? You have heard the words of the diſciple; let me ſubjoin thoſe of the Maſter—"Beware "leſt at any time your hearts be over-"charged," βαρυνθωσιν, made heavy, weigh-

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ed down, "with ſurfeiting and drunken- DISC. X.
"neſs," κραιπαλη και μεθη, too much eating, and too much drinking; "and ſo, that "day," the day of death, and of judgment, "come upon you unawares[d]."

Nor is it leſs expedient that we ſhould be duly and regularly exerciſed in every ſpecies of good works, and inured to bear with equanimity, and without inconvenience, the change of fortune and ſituation; that ſo, when called forth at the hour of trial, we may be found ready and expert at the fitteſt and beſt methods of doing the one, and undergoing the other. "Herein "(ſays St. Paul) do I exerciſe myſelf," ασκω, "to have always a conſcience void of "offence[e]." And he gives this advice to young Timothy; "Exerciſe thyſelf," γυμναζε σεαυτον, "unto godlineſs[f]." And reſpecting the patient endurance of change—"I have "learned, in whatſoever ſtate I am, there- "with to be content. I know both how

[d] Luke xxi. 34. [e] Acts xxiv. 16.
[f] 1 Tim. iv. 7.

DISC. X. "to be abaſed, and I know how to abound; "every where and in all things I am "inſtructed, both to be full and to be "hungry, both to abound and to ſuffer "need. I can do all things through Chriſt "that ſtrengtheneth me[g]." Great and illuſtrious champion! Well waſt thou prepared to enter the liſts, and to run thy race! Trained by thy holy inſtructions and example, and aided by the ſame Saviour, may we be enabled, at an humble diſtance, to follow thee, and to do likewiſe!

In order to this, we muſt remember to caſt away every impediment, as the competitors in the games did. "Let us lay aſide "every weight (ſays the Apoſtle) and the "ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us[h]," ευπεριστατον, *that intangles by wrapping round*, as the long and troubleſome garments of the Greeks, unleſs thrown off, would intangle and impede their ſteps, and prove the fatal cauſe of loſing the victory. What it is that incumbers and intangles him in his Chriſtian

[g] Philip. iv. 11. [h] Heb. xii. 1.

courſe,

courſe, there is no man but may ſoon learn, if he will but make an honeſt and diligent enquiry. And whatever it may be that does ſo incumber and intangle him, however near, and however dear, it muſt be parted with, and it is well worth his while to part with it. He will find himſelf abundantly recompenſed by the freedom and alacrity, the cheerfulneſs and joy, with which he will afterward proceed; by the delightful and permanent frame of mind, in which he may apply to himſelf that paſſage of the Pſalmiſt; "I will run the way of thy com-"mandments, for thou haſt ſet my heart at "liberty."

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Nothing now remains, but, in running the race, duly to obſerve the laws and rules preſcribed for the conduct of it. "If a "man ſtrive for maſteries (they are the "words of St. Paul to Timothy) he is not "crowned, except he ſtrive lawfully[1]," νομίμως, according to the laws and rules. He muſt aim at the right mark, he muſt run

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 5.

within

DISC. X. within the appointed limits, and he muſt behave fairly and honourably to his competitors. Of theſe laws and rules the Apoſtles have been the heralds, to proclaim and make them known. From their writings and from primitive tradition the church of England has framed her inſtitutions; in conformity to which our Univerſity has enacted her ſtatutes, ſo far as they concern religion and morals. But other objects, alas, are too often in the view, other purſuits too often engage the attention of our young men; and, inſtead of encouraging one another in the right way, too often they corrupt and ſeduce one another into thoſe ways that are not right. The more is the pity! O that occaſion were not thus given for the mouths of our adverſaries to be opened, for their tongues and their pens to be ſharpened, as they are, againſt us!—Let us agree to wipe off, without delay, the reproach that has been faſtened upon us, by performing our duty to God and man, upon a liberal and generous principle; by "running the race that is ſet be-"fore us," without the whips and goads

of

of pains and penalties, for his ſake "who "loved us, and gave himſelf for us." And for the encouragement of all to quit thoſe courſes which are wrong, to enter upon and perſevere in that which alone is right, let us turn our thoughts, in the

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Third, and laſt place, to the prize held forth as the reward of the conteſt, and that circle of ſpectators, who are the witneſſes of it, and of our behaviour under it.

To excite the emulation of the competitors in the Olympic games, by placing in their view the object of their ambition, the crowns appointed for the victors were laid upon a tripod, or table, which, during the celebrity, was brought out, and placed in the middle of the *ſtadium*.

Taking this idea with us, how juſt and noble do thoſe expreſſions appear — "I "preſs forward toward the mark," σκοπον, the goal, "for the prize of the high calling "of God in Chriſt Jeſus. I have fought "a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, "I have

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"I have kept the faith: henceforth there "is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will "give thee a crown of life. Hold faſt that "thou haſt, that no man take thy crown."

But the circumſtance moſt ſtriking in this part of the compariſon, is the mighty difference between the crowns beſtowed upon the conquerors in the Grecian games, and that reſerved in ſtore for them who ſhall finally overcome in the Chriſtian race. St. Paul has made the obſervation, and founded an unanſwerable argument upon it, why we ſhould not ſuffer ourſelves to be exceeded by them in the ſeverity of our preparatory diſcipline, or the vigour of our exertions in the courſe. "They do it (ſays he) to obtain a "corruptible crown; but we, an incorrupti-"ble[k]," ἀφθαρτον. And St. Peter ſpeaks of "a crown of glory that fadeth not away;" ἀμαραντινον, immortal, ever blooming—a fine contraſt to poor fading withering crowns of wild olive and parſley, for of theſe were the Olympian and Iſthmian garlands compoſed.

[k] 1 Cor. ix. 25.

The

The ſacred writers have exhauſted the powers of human language in deſcribing the reward which awaits the triumphant Chriſtian. The riches of heaven, the honour which cometh from God only, and the pleaſures at his right hand; the abſence of all evil, the preſence and enjoyment of all good; and this good enduring to eternity; never more to be taken from us; never more to be in any the leaſt degree diminiſhed, but for ever increaſing—theſe are the wreaths which form the contexture of that crown held forth to our hopes. And is not ſuch a crown worth contending for? Shall we not with cheerfulneſs and alacrity endure ſome hardſhips to obtain it? Surely, if by our words or our deeds we ſay, No, the Grecians, who endured ſo many, for ſo very trifling a conſideration, muſt riſe up in the judgment againſt us, and condemn us. DISC. X.

It may perhaps be alledged, that they ſaw the reward plainly before them, and that we do not. With our bodily eyes we do not. But a truth, confirmed to be ſuch by ſufficient

DISC. X. ſufficient authority, is, to all the intents and purpoſes of life, equally the object of our aſſent, of our firm truſt and reliance, equally the ground of action, with what we ſee. Founded on it's proper evidence, faith, like the dying martyr, "ſees heaven opened, and "Jeſus ſtanding at the right hand of God;" ſees thoſe who are already crowned, and "have received palms from the Son of God, "whom they confeſſed in the world." They compoſe a ſplendid and awful circle, beholding from the heights to which their Redeemer's favour has exalted them, the conflict in which we are ſtill engaged below, intereſting themſelves in our ſucceſs, encouraging us to ſtrive, and to perſevere, as they did, in the days of their fleſh.

Conformably to this idea, and alluding to that prodigious aſſembly from all parts of the earth, convened at Olympia, to be ſpectators of the games; before whom the candidates contended, having in view thoſe venerable perſonages, from whoſe hands they were to receive the palm, and who were imme-

immediate witneſſes of their reſpective conduct and merit—alluding, I ſay, to theſe circumſtances, St. Paul, in the xii^th^ chapter of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, places the Chriſtian combatant in the midſt of a moſt auguſt and magnificent theatre, filled with all thoſe great and illuſtrious characters, enumerated in the preceding chapter, as having overcome, through the power of faith, from the beginning of the world; whoſe preſence ſhould animate and fire him to engage in the conteſt, with an ambition not to be reprehended, and a ſpirit altogether invincible. DISC. X.

You will give me leave to conclude with the paſſage, every expreſſion of which you are now prepared to taſte and feel, in it's full force and energy.

" Wherefore, ſeeing we are compaſſed
" about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes,
" let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin
" which doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and let us
" run with patience the race that is ſet be-
" fore us; looking unto Jeſus, the author

" and

DISC. X. "and finiſher of our faith, who, for the joy "that was ſet before him, endured the "croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down "at the right hand of the throne of God. "For conſider him that endured ſuch con- "tradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt ye "be wearied and faint in your minds;" think of the hard and bitter conflict, through which he paſſed; reflect upon his fortitude, and the promiſe of his grace, and be no more languid and diſpirited. "Lift "up the hands which hang down, and the "feeble knees; and make ſtraight paths "for your feet, leſt that which is lame be "turned out of the way;" exert in the Chriſtian race thoſe nerves that have been relaxed, and collect thoſe ſpirits which have been depreſſed and dejected: make a ſmooth and even path for your ſteps, and remove the impediments which would obſtruct and retard your courſe.—In all the particulars that have been mentioned, and every other—if there be any other—so RUN, THAT YE MAY OBTAIN.

DISCOURSE XI.

THE CHRISTIAN ARMOUR.

EPHES. VI. 11.

Put on the whole armour of God.

IN the foregoing parts of the epiſtle, St. Paul had enforced the duties reſulting from the various relations of life. Theſe are eaſily ſtated, but, as all ſadly experience, not ſo eaſily performed. An oppoſition often ariſes within, excited by our own paſſions; and there are ſtill more formidable enemies, who attack us from without; endeavouring either to prevent us from forming proper reſolutions, or from carrying them into execution, when formed. Engaged as we are—neceſſarily engaged—in

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this perilous warfare, what is to be done? We are weak; how ſhall we become ſtrong? We are without armour, either to defend ourſelves, or to reſiſt and put the enemy to flight: from what magazine ſhall we be provided? Theſe queſtions are anſwered at large, and perfectly to ſatisfaction, in the portion of Scripture, which it ſhall be the deſign of the following diſcourſe to explain, being the portion appointed for the epiſtle of this day.

"Finally, my brethren, (ſays the Apoſtle, "having finiſhed his ſcheme of duty) be "ſtrong." If the ſentence cloſed here, the exhortation would be to little purpoſe. He who exhorts a weak man to become ſtrong, only mocks and inſults him, unleſs the means are pointed out by which this change may be effected; unleſs the ſource be diſcovered, from whence ſtrength is derived.

"Be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the "power of his might." That which was wanting,

wanting, is now fully ſupplied. What the power of God's might is, we very well know. Mountains tremble, and rocks melt before it; the ſea feels it, and flies; Jordan is driven back. Armies are diſcomfited, and cut off by a blaſt, in the night. The world itſelf was produced by this power, in one inſtant, and may be deſtroyed in another. All created power, if oppoſed to that of the Creator, withers and falls, like a leaf in autumn, when ſhaken by the ſtormy wind and tempeſt. It is "in the "power of this might," that the Apoſtle exhorts us to "be ſtrong." But how is this? "Haſt thou an arm like God; or "canſt thou thunder with a voice like "him?" Yet St. Paul would never enjoin us to ſeek after that, which could not be obtained. Our Redeemer is Almighty; he is with us by his Spirit, and his ſtrength is ours. Look at his apoſtles in their natural ſtate; ignorant, and fearful of every thing: view them "endued with power "from on high;" acquainted with the whole counſel of God, and bold to proclaim

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it through all the nations of the earth. During the perſecutions of the church in her infant ſtate, numbers of the weaker ſex, receiving ſtrength and courage from above, in the hour of trial, patiently endured all the torments which the malice of men and devils could invent. They triumphed glorioufly. "Now are they crowned, and "receive palms from the Son of God, "whom they confeſſed in the world." The promiſe of aſſiſtance in time of need is to us all; to us, and to our children, and to as many as the Lord our God ſhall call. From thee, bleſſed Jeſus, we learn our duty: to thee muſt we look, and to thy all-powerful grace, for ſtrength to perform it. Not in ourſelves, but in thee, and in the power of thy might, we are ſtrong. Without thee, we can do nothing: with thee, we can do all things.

It is this conſideration which alone can ſupport us, when we take a view of the enemies, whom we muſt encounter. Attend to our Apoſtle's deſcription of them. "We "wreſtle

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"wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but "againſt principalities, againſt powers, "againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this "world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in "high places." The meaning is, that our own deſires, carrying us on, through the corruption of our nature, towards forbidden actions, are not the only enemies with whom we are to contend; that there are others, not the leſs to be dreaded becauſe we cannot ſee them; namely, evil ſpirits, who, having been caſt out of heaven, are permitted, for a while, to diſturb the earth; to ſtir up againſt us either our own paſſions within, or the paſſions of other men without us; thus keeping the world in perpetual agitation, as the waves of the ſea are driven and toſſed by the wind. Such is our ſtate, and the danger of it calls upon us diligently to learn and to practiſe all the rules which will preſently be given us.

Men in our days, however, have found out a much ſhorter method, than that preſcribed by the Apoſtle, of dealing with

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theſe our ſpiritual enemies. They either diſbelieve the exiſtence of any ſuch; or, if they believe it, agree to think no more of them. Too often indeed we hear the name of our great adverſary pronounced; but it is only as a kind of expletive in common converſation. No point is leſs ſeriouſly thought of; and it ſeems as if Chriſtians were diſpoſed to lay it by, as an antiquated fable. Yet, if the Scriptures are not to be laid by, at the ſame time, this adverſary is there repreſented as ſomething real, and ſomething formidable. To him are aſcribed the force of a lion, and the ſubtlety of a ſerpent; he is ſaid to deceive the whole world; to have put it into the heart of Ananias, to tell a lie, and of Judas, to betray his maſter; to work in all the children of diſobedience. We are told, in ſhort, that "the Son of God was mani-"feſted to deſtroy the works of the devil." And can we then calmly and ſedately let it paſs, that there are no ſuch works and no ſuch perſon; or, that it is a matter of indifference, whether there be, or not?

Reſt

Reſt aſſured that ſuch enemies we have, and that we ſhall fail in the combat, unleſs aided by a ſtrength far ſuperior to our own. DISC. XI.

But ſince the ſtrongeſt man enters not into battle without his armour, proceed we to conſider that, which, as the ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt, the Apoſtle directs us to provide.

"Wherefore take unto you the whole "armour of God, that ye may be able to "ſtand in the evil day, and, having done "all, to ſtand."

We muſt not ſo rely on the divine aſſiſtance, as to neglect our own exertions. Beſides the ſtrength communicated, as occaſion requires, from above, there muſt be certain fixed and laſting diſpoſitions wrought in the mind, which may render it at all times prepared and qualified to reſiſt the enemy. Theſe are repreſented as ſo many different pieces of armour, which all together compoſe what is ſtyled "the

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" whole armour of *God.*" From him we receive it, and by him we are enabled to uſe it. It is to be put on and worn conſtantly; no more to be laid aſide than our [a] limbs, or our faculties. Nor muſt any part be omitted: " Put on the *whole* " armour of God." It is elſewhere called " the armour of *light*;" as ſerving, among other purpoſes, to diſcover to us the poſition, ſtrength, and deſigns of our adverſaries, " the rulers of the darkneſs of this world," who love darkneſs, and work in darkneſs. They muſt be diſcovered, before they can be conquered, or indeed attacked. Otherwiſe, approaching unſeen, they may ſuddenly attack and conquer us. Even when we have a ſufficiency of light, the day of battle is, as the Apoſtle ſays of it, " an " evil day," a day of toil, of labour, of hazard; a day, which all muſt wiſh to be well over; a day, in which nothing, but the armour of God, and the power of God, can enable us to brave the fury of the conflict; and having performed every thing

[a] Arma enim membra militis eſſe dicunt. Cic.

expected

expected of us as ſoldiers, to be found, unrepulſed, on our ſtation, when it ſhall be happily ended.—"That ye may be able "to ſtand in the evil day; and, having "done all, to ſtand."

Let us now ſurvey, one by one, the ſeveral pieces of this divine armour, only firſt premiſing to you, that St. Paul borrows his ideas from the arms in uſe among the nations in his own time, ſome of which are ſtill retained, while others have been long ſince dropped and changed.

"Stand, therefore, having your loins "girt about with Truth."

The Chriſtian muſt not ſuffer himſelf to be ſurpriſed. He muſt be always under arms, ever looking out, and waiting for the enemy, in the poſture of a combatant. In a camp, unleſs the watch be duly ſet, and kept, ſleep may be death. "I found him "dead"—ſaid the general, who killed a ſentinel ſleeping on his poſt—"I found "him

DISC. XI. "him dead, and I left him ſo."—"Stand, "therefore."

In the next words, "having your loins "girt about with Truth," an alluſion is made to the military belt, or girdle. It anſwered two ends. Firſt, it prevented the other garments from being in the way; ſecondly, it braced and ſtrengthened the loins, around which it was girt. In a word, it rendered all compact and firm. A ſincere and hearty attachment to Truth has a like effect upon the mind. The man poſſeſſed of it is at once decided in his choice, and in his meaſures. He knows what he has to do, and readily ſets about it, without let, or hindrance. A double minded man, who is guided ſometimes by principle, and ſometimes by intereſt, is unſtable and dilatory in all his ways. He has ſo many doubts, and difficulties, and hopes, and fears, that he can no more move and act with ſpirit and alertneſs, than one incumbered with a long flowing veſtment, in the folds of which the arms and feet are every moment

moment intangled. The reſolutions formed by ſuch an one are weak and feeble, preſently ſhaken and diſſolved by every freſh conſideration which comes acroſs him. He does nothing, or what is worſe than nothing, being generally, in the end, for want of ſtrength and ſteadineſs, carried away to do what he ought not to do. If he knows the Truth, he is eaſily prevailed upon to forſake it, for ſomething elſe. A ſoldier of this caſt will make but a deſpicable figure in the Chriſtian camp. Above all things therefore, keep the Truth cloſe to you, adhere immoveably to it, and "the "Truth ſhall make you free;" free to ſpeak, free to act, free—ſhould there be occaſion—to ſuffer. "Stand, having your "loins girt about with Truth,

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"And having on the breaſt-plate of "Righteouſneſs." The breaſt-plate, as it's name imports, was a plate of iron, or braſs, to ſecure the breaſt, and, conſequently, the heart, and other vital parts, contained within it.

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it. As an attachment to Truth was denominated a girdle, ſo by a breaſt-plate is repreſented a love of righteouſneſs, a conſciouſneſs of integrity, in ſhort, what we call, a good conſcience, "a conſcience "void of offence (as the Apoſtle elſewhere "ſpeaks) towards God, and towards man." But if any man ſin—and every man has ſinned—how then can he poſſeſs ſuch a conſcience? By ſuch his ſin being forgiven, upon his repentance, through the blood of Chriſt; when he becomes again righteous —for he is accounted to be ſo, againſt whom no charge any longer lies—and his conſcience is rendered again pure, or void of offence; for the offence being forgiven, is no more an offence, than if it had never exiſted. This is what we muſt ever mean by a good conſcience, a pure conſcience, a conſcience void of offence; ſince, if by thoſe expreſſions were meant, a conſciouſneſs of having never offended, no man living upon earth could have a conſcience good, pure, and void of offence; much leſs could

could St. Paul have had ſuch an one, who confeſſes himſelf to have been "the greateſt "of ſinners." DISC. XI.

A good conſcience, then, we ſay, is a breaſt-plate; it gives a holy confidence in God, which breaks the force of ſuch temptations as ariſe from the fears and terrors of the world, the malice, pride, and envy of mankind. It preſerves the heart whole and ſound, whatever of this kind may aſſail it. It is like a warm comfortable houſe, into which a man retreats; where he finds good proviſion, and good company; and hears the ſtorm without, beating upon it in vain. By doing what is right, and taking the proper method to obtain forgiveneſs when at any time you have been unawares ſeduced to do wrong, "exerciſe yourſelves," as the Apoſtle did, "to have a conſcience void of offence," and rejoice evermore in it's teſtimony. Secure this friend at home, and regard not what your enemies are ſaying againſt you abroad. "Their words may be ſpears and "arrows,

DISC. XI. "arrows, and their tongue a ſharp ſword;" but "the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs" is proof againſt all their ſtrokes.

We are enjoined, thirdly, to "have our "feet ſhod with the preparation of the "Goſpel of peace."

It is by the feet that men advance and make a progreſs in the way in which they are to go. That way is ſometimes rough, ſometimes miry, ſometimes beſet with briars and thorns. Soldiers of old were therefore furniſhed with a kind of armour for the leg and foot, that they might march, ſecure and unhurt, over all the different kinds of ground they were to meet with. Anſwerable hereunto is a certain "preparation" of mind in a Chriſtian, to advance in holineſs, and tread the path of duty, however rough with hardſhips, deep with afflictions, or perplexed and intangled with difficulties. For this preparation we are indebted to "the Goſ-"pel of peace." That alone can ſupply us with it.

"Above

" Above all, taking the ſhield of faith, DISC. XI.
" wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all
" the fiery darts of the wicked;" or " the
" wicked one."

The ſhield, or buckler, uſed of old, was a piece of defenſive armour, made of leather, of tough bull-hides, and covered with plates of braſs, thick and ſtrong: it was faſtened by thongs to the left arm, and readily moved to protect any part of the body, at which the warrior perceived, or had reaſon to expect, that a dart would be aimed: the dart then ſtruck the ſhield, was ſtopped, blunted, and fell harmleſs to the ground. Such to the Chriſtian warrior is *faith*, or *belief* in the divine promiſes and threatnings, the rewards and puniſhments of a future ſtate. It repels and extinguiſhes the fiery darts thrown by the tempting objects around us. For who would yield to a baſe luſt; who would ſuffer a proſpect of this world's wealth or honour to tempt him from his duty, if he ſaw heaven opened, and Jeſus ſtanding at the right hand of God, holding out a crown

for

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for the righteous; or the Almighty on his throne, prepared with a thunderbolt to ſtrike the wicked into a place of torment? —We do not ſee this with the bodily eye; but faith, which is "the evidence of things "not ſeen" as yet, makes it all preſent to the mind's eye, and, thus, repels every temptation to tranſgreſs, cauſing the fiery dart of the wicked one to fall, and *go out*, without hurting us. Were our faith always awake and active, it would preſerve us in our integrity: we never ſin, but when we have firſt ſuffered it to ſlumber: we are off our guard: "the ſhield of the mighty has "been ſhamefully caſt away."

The laſt piece of defenſive armour recommended by the Apoſtle is "the helmet "of ſalvation."

The helmet, as is well known, was a cap of iron or ſteel, for the head, to fence againſt any blows a part ſo very important; a part, from whence proceed all thoſe inſtruments of ſenſation, called the nerves; the

the ſeat of thought and underſtanding; and, as many philoſophers have imagined, the reſidence of the ſoul herſelf. The meaning of St. Paul in this expreſſion is explained in another paſſage, where, writing on the ſame ſubject, he ſays, "And for an *helmet*, the "*hope* of ſalvation." When we have loſt *hope*, a blow has been ſtruck, that ſtupifies and unnerves us; underſtanding periſhes, and ſtrength fails; deſpair is to the *Chriſtian*, what a ſtroke that cleaves the ſkull is to the *man*; there is no longer the breath of life in him. He who poſſeſſes the hope of ſalvation, through the power of ſuch hope can do all things, and bear all things; becauſe he ſtill looks forward to the end of his hope, which will reward all his actions, and make ample amends for all his ſufferings; but *that* once given up, there is nothing any longer worth contending for, or thinking about. The mind, turning itſelf on every ſide to ſeek reſt, and finding none, ſinks into all the wretchedneſs of utter deſpondency, and the agonizing groan of ſuicide is heard! Daily therefore cheriſh and invigorate your

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hope in Chriſt; pray daily to God, that it may never fail you; diligently read ſuch parts of holy Scripture as may revive it when languiſhing, and re-eſtabliſh it. Should you find your own meditations inſufficient, conſult, without delay, your miniſter, or ſome religious and ſenſible friend. A word of inſtruction, comfort and encouragement, from another, ſpoken in ſeaſon, has often prevented the dreadful crime of ſelf-murder from being committed. Evermore, then, remember to "take for an helmet, the "hope of ſalvation;" and put it not off, till the conteſt be finally over, and hope ceaſes by our becoming poſſeſſed of it's object.

To the Chriſtian, thus armed for defence in the day of battle, the Apoſtle recommends only one *offenſive* weapon; but it is abundantly ſufficient; "the *ſword* of the "Spirit, which is the word of God;" ſharper than any two-edged ſword fabricated by the art of man, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of

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the joints and marrow; reaching the very thoughts and intentions; ſubduing and mortifying evil deſires and blaſphemous imaginations, as they ariſe within; confuting and ſilencing infidelity and error, as they aſſault us from without. A ſingle text, well underſtood, and rightly applied, pierces the heart of a temptation, or an objection, and lays the moſt formidable adverſary dead at our feet. With this weapon the bleſſed Jeſus conquered in the wilderneſs; by the ſame weapon, and no other, muſt every diſciple of his expect to conquer in the world.

And now, friends, and fellow ſoldiers in the Chriſtian warfare, liſten to the voice of inſpiration, and be directed by one who cannot direct you wrong. Enemies of all kinds ſurround you; enter not into the battle unarmed: the hoſt of darkneſs is in array againſt you; put on the armour of light, to diſcover and ſurvey it. Let truth be the girdle of your loins, let righteouſneſs be the protection of your heart, and let the ſandals of the Goſpel of peace adorn and defend

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your feet in the way in which you go: let faith be your invincible ſhield, and hope your impenetrable helmet: and on the thigh be girded the ſword of the Spirit, bright and ſhining, and ready for uſe, and to be drawn, at a moment's warning. Thus completely armed from head to foot, always remembering from whence come ſkill and ſtrength for the battle, fall upon your knees, as the Apoſtle enjoins at the cloſe of his exhortation; "pray with all ſupplication, and watch "with all perſeverance." Then go forth, and may the Almighty go forth with you, teaching your hands to war, and your fingers to fight, and at length giving you a complete and glorious victory over every enemy, through the Captain of our ſalvation, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

DISCOURSE XII.

THE DUTY OF CONSIDERING THE POOR.

PSALM XLI. 1.

Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor.

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AS the world was made by wiſdom, it requires wiſdom to underſtand the frame of it. The more a man increaſes in wiſdom, the more he will underſtand it; and the more he underſtands, the more he will approve. The full perfection of a complex machine in all it's parts, with their reſpective bearings, and mutual dependencies on each other, is beſt comprehended by an artiſt. Superficial thinkers ſee little, and blame; deep thinkers ſee much, and commend.

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In viewing the conſtitution of the moral ſyſtem, there is ſcarcely a phænomenon that ſtrikes ſo forcibly upon the mind, or occaſions ſo much perplexity in it, as that of the inequality of mankind, or the ſtate and condition of the poor. In the paſſage of Scripture which has been juſt read, we are invited, by the promiſe of a Bleſſing, to employ our thoughts on that ſubject: "Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor;" that giveth himſelf thoroughly to ſtudy and underſtand their caſe, and why it is as it is; to ſee the reaſon of the thing, and his own duty reſulting from it.

The inequality of mankind is a plain and undeniable matter of fact: nor does it happen occaſionally, in this or that age, in this or that country: it is univerſal and unavoidable, at leaſt in the ſituation of affairs which has taken place in the world, ſince the Fall. From that period, it ever has been ſo, it ever will be ſo, it ever muſt be ſo, till the time of the reſtitution of all things. What, then, will be the firſt conſideration

ſideration with a rich man, when he ſees a poor man? If he be endowed with a clear head, and a good heart, will he not reaſon in ſome ſuch manner as the following? DISC. XII.

God has given the earth to the children of men, for the ſupport of all. While I abound, why does this man want? Plainly, that we may bear one another's burthens; that my abundance may ſupply his need, may alleviate his diſtreſs, may help to ſuſtain the affliction under which he groans; that I may take off his load of woe, and he take off the ſuperfluity of my wealth; that ſo the ſtream, now broken and turbid, may again find it's level, and flow pure and tranquil. Otherwiſe, if he be ſuffered thus to carry, on his own ſhoulders, through life, the weight of all this accumulated miſery, ſhould he murmur and complain, would it not be with ſome colour of juſtice, and muſt not I in ſome meaſure be anſwerable for his ſo doing? We are formed, by the ſame artificer, of the ſame materials; our truſt is in the ſame Saviour, and we muſt

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Nor let the rich imagine, that what they thus give is thrown away, or given to thoſe who can make no return: let them not grudge to beſtow ſome part of their wealth on the poor—they beſtow it on thoſe, to whom, under God, they owe the whole.

whole. For what, I beſeech you, is the nature of Society? Is it compoſed only of the noble and opulent? Did you ever hear, or read, of one that was ſo compoſed? Such a Society could not ſubſiſt for a week. As the members of it would not work, they could not eat. Of what value were your eſtates in the country, if the poor did not cultivate them? Of what account the riches of the nobleman, or the gentleman, if they muſt want the comforts, the conveniences, and even the neceſſaries of life? "The king himſelf is ſerved by the field," and, without the labours of the huſbandman, muſt ſtarve in his palace, ſurrounded by his courtiers and guards. The world depends, for ſubſiſtence, on the plough, the ſickle, and the flail[a]! To what purpoſe warehouſes of merchandiſe in the city? Who but the poor will ſubmit to the drudgery of exporting our own commodities, and importing others in return? Nay, by whom, but by the poor, could they be prepared either for conſumption at home, Disc. XII.

[a] See M'Farlan, p. 256.

or

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or exportation abroad; could they be manufactured from firſt to laſt; could they be brought, and lodged in the warehouſes of the merchant; could ſuch warehouſes be built, and fitted to receive them?

Mankind, in ſhort, conſtitute one vaſt body, to the ſupport of which every member contributes his ſhare; and by all of them together, as by ſo many greater and leſſer wheels in a machine, the buſineſs of the public is carried on, it's neceſſities are ſerved, and it's very exiſtence is upholden. And in this body we may truly ſay, that the loweſt and leaſt honourable members are as neceſſary as any others; indeed, they have in one ſenſe a more abundant honour; for though the head be, without all doubt, a more noble part than either the feet or the hands, yet what would ſoon be the fate of the beſt head in the world, if theſe it's ſervants ſhould ceaſe to miniſter to it? The rich therefore cannot live alone, without the poor; and they never ſupport the poor, but the poor have firſt ſupported them.

them. And ſhould they be permitted to periſh, by whom we all live? Forbid it prudence and gratitude, as well as philoſophy and religion.

From hence it appears, that the inequality of mankind is not the effect of chance, but the ordinance of Heaven, by whoſe appointment, as manifeſted in the conſtitution of the univerſe, ſome muſt command, while others obey; ſome muſt labour, while others direct their labours; ſome muſt be rich, while others are poor. The Scripture inculcates the ſame important truth, and the inference to be deduced from it—"The poor ſhall never ceaſe out "of the land: therefore I command thee, "ſaying, Thou ſhalt open thine hand wide "unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to "thy needy in thy land[b]." Such is the method directed by Heaven of balancing the account between the different orders of men. Any other ſcheme of equality would deſtroy itſelf, as ſoon as formed.

[b] Deut. xv. 11.

And

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And politicians ſhould be extremely cautious how they propagate principles tending to render the ſubordinate ranks in ſociety diſcontented with their condition, and deſirous of aſpiring to one for which they were never deſigned by Providence, of whoſe arrangements in the moral, we may ſay, as the Pſalmiſt does of thoſe in the natural world, "In wiſdom haſt thou made "them all!"

The foregoing conſideration will ſuggeſt another to the mind of every one, whoſe meditations are turned towards the ſubject. For ſince there is, and, to anſwer the purpoſes of ſociety, there muſt be, ſuch inequality among men, it is but natural to aſk the man, who finds himſelf in a ſituation preferable to that of his neighbour, and yet refuſes to have compaſſion upon him in his diſtreſs—How came your lot to be caſt in ſo fair a ground? You might have been deſtitute of health and ſtrength, of food and raiment, of inſtruction and knowlege. Who cauſed you thus to differ from

from your poor brother? His capacity, perhaps, with due cultivation, might have evinced itſelf not a whit inferior to your own; his morals may be purer than yours; and had he been poſſeſſed of your wealth, he might have made a better uſe of it than you do. It is not your merit, or his demerit, which occaſions the difference between you. It has been permitted, that the work of God may be manifeſted in you both; that he from his poverty may learn patience and reſignation, and you be taught charity, and the right employment of the good things vouchſafed you. He was not ſuffered to fall into this condition, that you ſhould overlook and deſpiſe, but that you ſhould conſider and comfort him. You have an advantage over him, without doubt—and your Saviour has informed you, wherein it conſiſts—"It is more bleſſed to give, than "to receive." Secure this bleſſing, and the end of your being made to differ is anſwered.

It might have pleaſed God that you *ſhould*

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ſhould have been poor—But this is not all—It may pleaſe him, that you *ſhall* be ſo: and hard would you eſteem it, in ſuch a caſe, not then to experience the benevolence you are now invited to diſplay. It is God's high prerogative to exalt, and to abaſe: he putteth down one, and ſetteth up another. The hiſtory of the world is but a comment on this text. Empires, whoſe ſtamina ſeemed to have been compoſed of iron and braſs, are ſeen to decay and periſh; while others, little thought of, ariſe from the duſt, and flouriſh in their places. That the ſame thing happens reſpecting families and individuals, the chronicles of the times contain abundant evidence; and inſtances will occur to your minds of revolutions in this way ſudden and deciſive as that mentioned by the Pſalmiſt in another—"In the morning "it is green, and groweth up; but in the "evening it is cut down, dried up, and "withered!" To theſe rapid changes citizens of commercial ſtates are more liable than others. A fleet puts to ſea, laden with the precious commodities of the eaſt

or

or the weſt. At the word of the Creator, the ſtormy wind ariſeth; the veſſels are diſperſed; they ſink in the mighty waters; the fortunes and the hopes of the owners go down with them. The failure of one perſon affects many others; and theſe breaches on private credit cauſe us, ever and anon, to caſt an anxious eye toward the public, and to think what might have been the effect of an inſurrection, and a conflagration. To the riches of this country is more peculiarly applicable that which the wiſe man ſaith of them in general—"They make themſelves wings"—yea, *their* wings are ready made; they are prepared, at the ſhorteſt notice, to "fly away," and leave a nation poor indeed! Thus weighty and powerful are the reaſons why WE ſhould not truſt in riches ſo eminently *uncertain*; without taking into the account examples, in which the Almighty ſometimes makes bare his holy arm in a more tremendous manner.

But whether riches leave you, or not, yet

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yet a little while—and it can be but a little while—before you muſt leave them. However gay and proſperous you go through life, death will certainly ſtrip you of all, and leave you more truly deſtitute, than the neediеſt wretch that was ever laid at your gate. Neither land nor money can accompany you to the grave. The hour muſt come—and while we ſpeak, it is haſtening forward—when ſtrength will droop, beauty will fade, and ſpirits will fail; when phyſicians will deſpair, friends will lament, and all will retire; when from the palaces of the city, and the paradiſes of the country, you muſt go down to the place where all theſe things are forgotten, and take up your reſidence in the ſolitude of the tomb.—What, *then*, will riches avail?—Much every way, if they have been beſtowed in charity; if the thought of death—that moſt profitable and ſalutary of all thoughts, that epitome of true philoſophy—ſhall have excited you, through life, to "conſi-"der the poor."

For

For it is in the Goſpel, that we muſt ſeek *full* information on the ſubject of this moſt important duty. It is there, and there alone, we are inſtructed to behold the poor, as we ought to behold them; to conſider (if I may uſe ſuch apparently ſtrange expreſſions) their pre-eminence, their dignity, and thoſe eſpecial privileges, with which they are inveſted, under the new œconomy. The world was redeemed by one, who, for that purpoſe, did not diſdain to appear in the form of a poor man; one, who, while "the foxes had holes, and the birds of the "air had neſts, had not where to lay his "head." I ſpeak to them that "know the "grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, "though he was rich, yet for our ſakes "became poor, that we, through his po-"verty, might be rich." *His* appearance in this ſtate has caſt a glory round it, and forces us to view it in a new light; ſo that although to the bodily eye nothing appears but what is baſe, mean, and contemptible, yet the interior eye of the underſtanding, enlightened from above, diſcovers the per-

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ſon of the Saviour, the images of his poverty, the citizens of his kingdom, the heirs of his promiſes, the ſtewards of his bleſſings. Let it be allowed me, in paſſing, barely to ſuggeſt a hint in favour of the Religion, which has thus furniſhed a remedy for the inequality of mankind, and, while it's precepts ſhall be obeyed by the rich, has provided for the welfare and comfort of the poor.

But in what meaſure, it may be ſaid, are theſe precepts to be obeyed? How are we to proportion our donations to our fortunes? The number of thoſe who call upon us for aſſiſtance is daily increaſing; and ſo are the expences of life, which render us leſs able to aſſiſt them.

In anſwer to theſe queſtions, it might perhaps be aſſerted, that, were the Chriſtian principle firmly rooted in the heart, they would never be aſked. True Charity ſtands not in need of being told how much it ſhould give. It is in it's nature free and unbounded,

unbounded, as the air diffuſed through the ſpaces around us, or the light which flows in every direction from the centre, for the ſupport and animation of the world. It fulfils the law, or rather, goes beyond all law, and of it's own will effects that wherein law itſelf fails. It not only "works "no ill to it's neighbour;" it does him all the good in it's power, and wiſhes it could do him more.—Thus much might be replied in general. But as this is a part of our ſubject, which comes home to men's buſineſs and boſoms; as, through the infirmity and corruption that are in us, the divine principle may at times be upon the decline, and the ſelfiſh principle likely to gain the aſcendant, it may not be improper to dwell a moment longer upon it, and to lay down a rule or two, the obſervance of which will greatly conduce towards ſuſtaining the one, and repreſſing the other[c].

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[c] See Bourdaloue ſur l'Aumône, et Bib. Choiſ. 14. 291.

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The firſt rule ſhall be this — Let every perſon, at thoſe ſeaſons when he is in the receipt of his income, lay aſide a certain proportion, as he is diſpoſed in his heart, for charitable uſes; and let it be, ever after, ſacred to thoſe uſes. A bank of this kind would enable a man to anſwer bills of conſiderable value at ſight, which otherwiſe not being able to do, or at leaſt not without great inconvenience, many opportunities of ſuccouring the diſtreſſed muſt needs be loſt. The money being once appropriated, he feels not the loſs, nor grudges the payment, when demanded. Thus he is always giving, and has always ſomething to give.

The ſecond rule, if you pleaſe, may be the following — *Practiſe œconomy, with a view to charity.* The ſame charity, which is deſirous of doing the utmoſt for the benefit of it's poor neighbour, is likewiſe very ingenious in deviſing the ways and means of doing it. And though, in the preſent ſtate of ſociety, it be not required, that the

the opulent ſhould ſell their poſſeſſions, and divide the produce among the indigent, or that perſons of all ranks and conditions ſhould live in the ſame ſtyle; yet, ſurely, no one can ſurvey the world, as it goes now among us, without being of opinion, that *ſomething*—and that very far from inconſiderable—*ſomething*, I ſay, might be retrenched from the expences of building, *ſomething* from thoſe of furniture, *ſomething* from thoſe of dreſs, *ſomething* from thoſe of the table, *ſomething* from thoſe of diverſions and amuſements, public and private, for the relief and conſolation of the many, who have neither a cottage to inhabit, garments to cover them, bread to eat, medicine to heal them, nor any one circumſtance in life to lighten their load of miſery, or cheer their ſorrowful and deſponding ſouls, in the day of calamity and affliction. Certainly a man would be no loſer, who ſhould ſometimes ſit down to a leſs profuſe and coſtly board at home, if at his going abroad, "when "the ear heard him, then it bleſſed him; "and when the eye ſaw him, it gave wit-

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"neſs to him; becauſe he delivered the "poor that cried, and the fatherleſs, and "him that had none to help him; if the "bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh "came upon him, and he cauſed the widow's "heart to ſing for joy."—Beneficence is the moſt exquiſite luxury, and the good man, after all, is the genuine epicure.

Here, then, is a mine opened, which, when worked by œconomy, under the direction of prudence, will be found inexhauſtible, furniſhing a conſtant and ample revenue for the diſburſements of charity, to the profit of multitudes, without oppreſſing or injuring any one human being. Nay, from that diverſion (if it can be called ſuch) under the effects of which the nation now groans through all it's powers, the evil might ſoon be extracted, could a law be poſſibly carried into execution, enacting, that the ſums reſpectively loſt and won ſhould be applied to the ſame bleſſed purpoſe. The amuſement might continue, and pleaſure be employed in the intereſt of virtue.

The

The ſupplies thus provided, let us advert to the expenditure. DISC. XII.

Of the poor, ſome are both able and willing to work. When theſe are forced to beg, becauſe no one will hire them to dig, their lot is truly pitiable. The moſt excellent method of ſhewing charity to ſuch is by finding them employment, which at once relieves their wants, and preſerves them from temptation. Every ſcheme that policy can deviſe ſhould be put in practice at this time, when ſo many thouſands, that have been engaged, at the hazard of their lives, in our defence and protection, by ſea and land, muſt otherwiſe be reduced to ſtarve, to ſteal, or to emigrate. Individuals, bleſſed with affluence, have a noble opportunity of adorning their eſtates, while, with this farther end in view, as citizens they moſt effectually ſerve their country, and as Chriſtians they ſhall by no means loſe their reward. The community ſhould ſtrain every nerve in the cauſe. Days of peace ſhould be days of improvement. De-

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ſigns of public utility ſhould be forthwith entered upon. Returning and increaſing commerce will ſuggeſt many. The encouragement of manufactures, the eſtabliſhment of new fiſheries in different parts of the kingdom, the cultivation of waſte lands, of which (ſtrange to tell!) there are thouſands of acres lying within a few miles of the metropolis—theſe are the objects, which rival ſtateſmen ſhould unite to proſecute. Let us hope we ſhall live to ſee the day, when they will do ſo! "In the multitude "of the people is the ſtrength of the "king." Provide employment, and you will never want people, nor will thoſe people want food. Hands will flock where there is work to be done; and between working and eating the connection is indiſſoluble[a].

In the ſecond claſs of the poor may be ranked thoſe who are able to work, but not willing. Theſe compoſe a band very formidable to ſociety. To maintain them

[a] See M'Farlan, p. 416.

in

in idleneſs, is to render them every day more ſo. They muſt be inured to labour by wholeſome diſcipline. You cannot ſhew them a greater kindneſs. Thus, and thus only can their ferocity be tamed, and their paſſions ſubdued; good principles may in time take the place of bad ones, and habits of induſtry by degrees be formed and matured. To effect this end by theſe means is the deſign (and a moſt admirable deſign it is) of one part of thoſe many charitable inſtitutions, for which this great and flouriſhing city is ſo deſervedly famous throughout the world, and for which I have the honour this day to appear as an unworthy advocate. DISC. XII.

Another part of them is calculated to diminiſh, as much as may be, the numbers of this claſs of poor; it goes directly to the root of the diſorder, and endeavours that the good principles and habits above-mentioned may from the very beginning be implanted in the young and tender mind, by a virtuous and well-conducted education, thus

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thus ſowing the ſeeds of felicity for future ages.

In the moſt ample and munificent manner is proviſion made by others of them for a third claſs of poor, ſuch, I mean, as are willing to work, but not able; for of whatever nature the diſability may be, or from whatever cauſe it may have proceeded, whether from caſual hurt, from the languor of diſeaſe, or from a diſtempered mind, immediate help is at hand. All the preſſing miſeries incident to man have here their peculiar houſes of reception and relief, where the moſt conſummate ſkill, medical and chirurgical, that can be obtained by him who is the poſſeſſor of millions, is readily and cheerfully exerted, for the eaſe and recovery of the poor[b] — inſtitutions theſe, unknown, unthought of, in the poliſhed ages of Greece and Rome — peculiar to the days of the Goſpel — the boaſt of Chriſtianity (were it capable of boaſting), the ornament and glory of this great em-

[b] M'Farlan, 299.

porium!

porium!—How effectual they have proved in anſwering the ſeveral ends propoſed, the *Report*, now to be recited, will beſt inform you. DISC. XII.

Here the REPORT *was read.*

The caſe itſelf ſpeaks ſo forcibly to your feelings, and calls ſo loudly for your kind aſſiſtance, that it renders needleſs any long exhortation from the preacher. The expences annually incurred by the ſeveral hoſpitals you find to exceed their certain revenues; and therefore, they muſt depend, for ſupport, on the farther donations of the benevolent. Suffer not the blaze of charity, which now burns with ſo much heat and ſplendour, to die away for want of laſting fuel. You have heard how uſeful theſe eſtabliſhments have proved; be it your endeavour to make them permanent. Whatever can be ſpared (and with proper management much by every one may be ſpared), let it be lodged, as a treaſure—a treaſure to yourſelves, as well as to them—

in

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in theſe public repoſitaries—It is lodged in good hands, and will be employed, to the uttermoſt farthing, as your hearts can deſire. Did I plead only for one of them, attention would be due; let me not lift up my voice in vain, when I lift it up for them all. "Among thoſe actions," ſays the great moraliſt of the age—"among "thoſe actions which the mind can moſt "ſecurely review with unabated pleaſure, "is that of having contributed to an hoſ-"pital for the ſick."—But we have a more ſure word, a word which cannot fail, which ſhall ſtand faſt for ever—a word of promiſe, that he who has been the means of giving comfort to the ſick, beſides being bleſſed with proſperity in the days of health, ſhall, when himſelf in ſickneſs, be comforted with comfort from above. "Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor; "the Lord will deliver him in time of "trouble. The Lord will preſerve him "and keep him alive, and he ſhall be "bleſſed upon the earth; and thou wilt "not deliver him into the will of his ene-"mies.

"mies. The Lord will ſtrengthen him "upon the bed of languiſhing: thou wilt "make all his bed in his ſickneſs." — The ſame gracious hand will conduct him, in perfect ſafety, through the valley of the ſhadow of death, to that holy and heavenly hill, where he ſhall be hailed by the thouſands he has relieved, and ſee the face of that Redeemer, for whoſe ſake he has relieved them.

DISCOURSE XIII.

CHARITY TO THE BRETHREN OF CHRIST.

MATT. XXV. 40.

And the King ſhall anſwer and ſay unto them, Verily, I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

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YET once again, by the favour of the Almighty, we have lived to ſee the return of this holy ſeaſon; again we are aſſembled in the houſe of God, to turn our thoughts towards the ſecond Advent of our Lord. The church by her ſervices on this day directs us to do ſo, and we will obey her. In the portion of Scripture ſelected for the Goſpel, his appearance and the

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the forerunners of it are marked out for our contemplation; ſigns above, and terrors beneath: the earth diſtreſſed and perplexed, the powers of heaven ſhaken, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things which are coming—the trumpet ſounds through all the regions of the grave, "Ariſe, ye dead, and come to "judgment:" the everlaſting doors are unfolded: the King of glory, triumphant Meſſiah, Lord of men and angels, appears in the reſplendent robes of celeſtial majeſty: the armies in heaven follow him, in proceſſion, down to this lower world: the throne is ſet; the books are opened: the dead are judged; and that ſentence is paſſed, from which there lies no appeal.

Is all this true? Moſt aſſuredly it is. No perſon who hears me at this moment dares even to *think* it is not. A monitor within bears a faithful teſtimony to what I ſay, and will not ſuffer infidelity or doubt to intrude.

And

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And are we — you and I — concerned in it all? As certainly as we are now met together in this place: no man or woman who ever has been, or ever will be born, can claim exemption — "We muſt *all* appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt."

Some little degree of curioſity I ſhould therefore hope may have been excited, to enquire into the grounds upon which will be paſſed an irreverſible ſentence either to everlaſting happineſs, or everlaſting miſery: for there is no middle condition; of one or the other we muſt inevitably partake. The Scripture, from whence my text is taken, will afford us conſiderable aſſiſtance in the enquiry, and enable us to form ſome ſort of opinion beforehand, where our lot is likely to fall.

Our Lord, according to St. Matthew's account, being at the eve of his ſufferings, the hiſtory of which commences at the next (the xxvith) chapter, cloſes his divine inſtructions to his diſciples with a repreſen-

DISC. XIII. repreſentation of his future proceedings on the great and awful day. "When the ſon of "man," ſays he, "ſhall come in his glory, "and all the holy angels with him, then ſhall "he ſit upon the throne of his glory; and be- "fore him ſhall be gathered all nations; and "he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, "as a ſhepherd [in the evening] divideth "his ſheep from the goats. And he ſhall "ſet the ſheep on his right hand, but the "goats on the left." To the former he firſt addreſſes that inexpreſſibly ſweet invitation, mercy to the laſt rejoicing againſt judgment, and delighting to give the inheritance which it had ſpared no pains to purchaſe — "Come, ye bleſſed of my Fa- "ther, inherit the kingdom prepared for "you from the foundation of the world." Now be pleaſed to obſerve the reaſon upon which this invitation is founded. "For," ſaith Chriſt, "I was an hungred, and ye "gave me meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave "me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took "me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was "ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in priſon,

"and

" and ye came unto me." The righteous, very few of whom, out of the innumerable multitudes that are to be then aſſembled, ever ſaw their Lord in the days of his humiliation, wondering what this ſhould mean, reply, with all the ſubmiſſive earneſtneſs of affection, "Lord, when ſaw we thee " an hungry, and fed thee; or thirſty, and " gave thee drink; or relieved thee in any " of the other circumſtances of which thou " art pleaſed thus to ſpeak?" The words of the text contain his moſt gracious anſwer — " Verily, I ſay unto you, inaſ- " much as ye have done it unto the leaſt of " theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto " me." DISC. XIII.

Let us conſider the *works* to be done, the *principle* on which they are to be done, and the *acceptance* they will be ſure to find.

I. The works to be done — " Inaſmuch " as ye have done it." By a Chriſtian there is always ſomething to be *done*. It was never intended that he, of all men, ſhould

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be idle. Providence has given him powers and opportunities, and will require an account of the uſe that has been made of them. In the Goſpel we are told of a ſervant, ſtyled the unprofitable ſervant. Inſtead of improving the talent committed to his truſt, he had hidden his Lord's money in the earth; he had buried his faculties in ſloth and ſenſuality; they had produced nothing. Dreadful was his puniſhment, and it was in kind: he was bound hand and foot, and caſt into outer darkneſs; as he *would* do nothing when he had the power, that power was taken from him, and he now *could* do nothing, but reflect for ever on his own miſery, and the happineſs he had loſt.

Reſpecting the men of the world, it cannot be ſaid that they are always idle: they are often buſily employed; they are doing ſomething; they are doing much; but it is, miſchief; miſchief to themſelves, miſchief to others. And to very few of thoſe, whoſe exploits fill the volumes of hiſtory,

and

and engage the attention of ages, can it be truly ſaid, "Well done, good and faithful "ſervant." The unprofitable and the workers of iniquity will be bound with the ſame chain. DISC. XIII.

Of doing evil we frequently think—if we think at all—with abhorrence, and, it is to be hoped, labour to keep ourſelves from it. But the crime of doing nothing, with the penalty annexed to it, is not recollected. That we have often, notwithſtanding all our care, "done thoſe things "which we ought not to have done," we muſt be ſenſible; but who is he, that duly conſiders how often he has "left undone "thoſe things which he ought to have "done." They are the ſins of *omiſſion*, that will crowd the account at the laſt day, more in number than the hairs of our heads. The thought would cauſe our hearts to fail us, ſhould God be extreme to mark them.

The character of the Chriſtian religion

DISC. XIII. is moſt exactly portrayed in thoſe few words which deſcribe the life of it's founder—"He went about, doing good;" *active* in *beneficence*, always in motion, for ſome ſalutary purpoſe; to relieve the diſtreſſes, and comfort the ſorrows of poor mankind. He expects that they who profeſs to be his followers, ſhould be ſuch more eſpecially in this reſpect. Of the diſciple *Tabitha* it is teſtified by the Holy Spirit, in the Acts of the Apoſtles, that "ſhe was full of good "works and alms-deeds which ſhe did." The garments wrought by her own hands for the poor, were produced before the Apoſtle, to prove that ſhe had not been idle; that ſhe had been *employed*; that ſhe had been *well* employed. She obtained the peculiar favour of a reſurrection to this life, to ſhew, I ſuppoſe, that all like her will obtain one to a better.—What a ſad reverſe have we in the caſe of the rich glutton! He appropriated to his own luxury the means put into his hands to do good to others. And where is he now? You hear his voice requeſting of the wretched object

that

that had lain neglected at his gate, "a drop "of water to cool his tongue."—Wretched man that he was! ſo to loſe the opportunities, which ſhall never return!—But why ſhould I multiply inſtances, or ſay any more upon this part of the ſubject, when our Lord, in the Scripture before us, has declared, that his gracious invitation, "Come, "ye bleſſed," will be made only to ſuch as have performed theſe works of charity? How can it be made to us, if we have *not* performed them? From the neceſſity of performing them, paſs we, therefore, DISC. XIII.

II. To the *principle* upon which they muſt be performed.

By faith we are ſaved; but faith without works is dead; it is no more faith, effectual to ſalvation, than a dead corpſe is a man; it is a tree without fruit: notwithſtanding all it's profeſſions, it will be ſentenced to the axe and to the fire. The proper fruit of faith is love; love of God who has done ſo much for man; love of

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man for whom God hath done ſo much. Love can work no ill to it's neighbour; it's nature is to work him all the good in it's power; it branches forth into every office of charity mentioned by our Lord; it feeds the hungry; gives drink to the thirſty; clothes the naked; lodges the ſtranger; viſits, and comforts the ſick, and thoſe that are in priſon. It may not be able literally and perſonally to do all this; but it provides for this being done, by freely and liberally contributing that money, which anſwers every thing. And theſe acts of beneficence and kindneſs are performed, not out of intereſt, or party, or to ſerve a turn; not out of vanity, or oſtentation, or becauſe others perform them, and we ſhall be reflected on, and loſe the eſteem of men, if we neglect to perform them; but they are performed through faith in what Chriſt has done and ſuffered for us, and through a grateful deſire of making ſome return, for all his goodneſs, to thoſe whom he is pleaſed to ſtyle *his brethren*. "Inaſmuch "as ye have done it to theſe *my brethren*."

"The

"The children being partakers of fleſh and "blood, he alſo (by coming in the fleſh) "partook of the ſame; for which reaſon "he is not aſhamed to call them *brethren*." Conſider duly the weight of this motive. When you do good upon the ſtrength of it, it is as if you addreſſed a poor perſon in the following manner — I relieve you in your diſtreſs becauſe of the near relation you bear to that bleſſed perſon, who has relieved me in all mine; my friend, my benefactor, my Saviour, my God. I too was an hungred, and he gave me the bread of life; I was thirſty, and he gave me the water of life; I was a ſtranger, not belonging to the fold, and he took me into it; I was naked, and he clothed me with the robe of righteouſneſs; I was ſick, and he viſited me, and comforted me, and made me whole; I was in priſon, and he came to me, looſed the bands of ſin and death, and brought me forth into light, liberty, and ſalvation. You come recommended to me as one of thoſe, whom he condeſcends to call his brethren. Accept, for his ſake,

DISC. XIII. what I can give you: I would it were more: all I have is too little.

You ſee, then, the principle on which Chriſt directs, that our charity ſhould be ſhewn. A noble, comprehenſive, affecting principle it is. It involves within it's compaſs, and ſuppoſes to be known and believed, the whole of Chriſtianity. Thus employed, faith has it's perfect work: it is made perfect in love. The acceptance it will be ſure to find is the

III^d and laſt point to be conſidered.

Our Lord accepts ſuch works when done upon ſuch a principle, as if they had been done to himſelf. "Inaſmuch as ye "have done it unto one of theſe my bre-"thren, ye have done it unto *me*." And this produces a reaſon for his rewarding them, which no other conſideration would afford. Infinite mercy, after beſtowing every thing upon us, has, as it were, ſet itſelf to contrive a manner in which it might become

our

our debtor. "You have done theſe acts of kindneſs to ME; I take upon me to recompenſe them." There is ſomething ſo utterly aſtoniſhing in all this, that we might have imagined ſome miſtake crept into the text, had no other paſſage of Scripture conveyed to us the ſame idea. For that our Lord will accept and reward what ſhall be ſo done to *him*, can be known only from himſelf, and his Holy Spirit. DISC. XIII.

But to *reward*, is the great end of his coming; as he has himſelf declared, in the xxii[d] chapter of St. John's Revelation. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward "is with me, to give to every man, ac-"cording as his work ſhall be."

Before his appearance in the fleſh, as at this time, he proclaimed by one of his holy prophets, that whatſoever we give to the poor he eſteems as lent to himſelf; which much reſembles the words of the text, "Ye "have done it unto me." And he does not diſdain to add, that he will be accountable for

DISC. XIII. for it; ſince thus we read, in the book of Proverbs; "He that hath pity upon the "poor, *lendeth* unto the Lord; and look" — expect, depend upon it, be aſſured — "it ſhall be paid him again." Sir *Thomas More*, a famous Lord Chancellor of England, uſed always to ſay, "there was more "rhetoric," more perſuaſive argument, "in "this little ſentence, than in a whole li-"brary."

Again. He aſſures us by his bleſſed Apoſtle, that every deed of kindneſs which is ſhewn, in this manner, towards *his name*, will be *remembered*; for "God "(ſaith the Apoſtle) is not unrighteous, "that he ſhould forget your work and la-"bour of love, which ye have ſhewn to-"wards his name" (towards *his name* you ſee) "in that ye have miniſtered to the "ſaints, and do miniſter," ſtill continuing, perſevering in your charitable contributions; not ſuffering any good work of this ſort, which has been begun amongſt you, to ceaſe, and come to nothing. Without apoſto-

apoſtolical authority, we ſhould never have hazarded the expreſſion here uſed; "God "is not unrighteous, that he ſhould for-"get;" as if we might even deem him *unjuſt*, if he ſhould not remember works of charity done to himſelf in the perſons of the poor.—Thus every thing contributes to eſtabliſh the gracious declaration in my text; "Inaſmuch as ye have done it unto "theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto "me."

I aſk your pardon—I have omitted a word—it runs, "Inaſmuch as ye have done "it unto *the leaſt* of theſe my brethren." Not men and women only, grown perſons, are meant; children alſo are included; the LEAST of theſe. *They* are never left out of the account by our Lord, in his promiſes and aſſurances of mercy: "Suffer little "children to come to me: It is not the "will of my Father, that one of theſe little "ones ſhould periſh." Though the young-eſt, and the leaſt, they are ſtill the *brethren* of

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of the Redeemer. They ſhare *his* love; let them ſhare *yours*. "A cup of cold "water only given to one of theſe little "ones in the name of a diſciple, ſhall in no "wiſe loſe it's reward."

But it is in *your* power to give them much more. You *have* given them much more: you *have* miniſtered; continue ſtill to miniſter. Through your bounty it is, that they now appear in this ſacred place; their bodies neatly clothed, their minds duly inſtructed, and qualified, with us, to worſhip our God in the beauty of holineſs. A pleaſant and comfortable ſight it is to behold. The world cannot ſhew us one that is more ſo. Conſider them as fully included in the caſe before us. They are in *want*; and they bear a near *relation* to Chriſt. They can hardly be thought, at this tender age, to have forfeited the high privileges of their baptiſm, in which they were made "members of Chriſt, children "of God, and heirs of the kingdom of "heaven." And much indeed may it depend

pend upon you, whether they ever *do* forfeit them; the great deſign of theſe excellent inſtitutions being to afford them opportunities of inſtruction, which their friends are unable to give, or procure for them: to ground them well in ſuch religious principles, as may render them good and uſeful members of ſociety, conduct them ſafe through a world of temptations, and bring them to never-ending glory. But the ſupport of the inſtitution, which is to do this for them, depends upon your farther bounty. On this, deſtitute of every other help, they, under the Providence of God, rely; on *you* their eyes and hopes are fixed, for the continuance of every advantage: and every advantage they enjoy will be continued to them, by the liberality of all ſuch among you, as ſhall duly meditate upon the affecting ſcene I have been endeavouring to repreſent.

This affecting ſcene you will as ſurely ſee, theſe affecting words of the great judge

you

DISC. XIII. you will as ſurely hear, as he who has declared you ſhall ſee and hear them, is faithful and true.

One thing only remains to be mentioned, that He who ſhall addreſs thoſe on the right hand in the gracious language of the text, ſhall afterward ſay alſo to "them on the "left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, "into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil "and his angels; for I was an hungred, "and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, "and ye gave me no drink; I was a ſtran-"ger, and ye took me not in; naked, and "ye clothed me not; ſick and in priſon, "and ye viſited me not." On *their* aſking, likewiſe, *when* he was ſeen of them in any of theſe afflicting circumſtances, and they had thus ungratefully denied him relief; "he ſhall anſwer them; Inaſmuch as ye "did it *not* to one of the leaſt of theſe my "brethren, ye did it not to *me*." The final ſeparation is then to be made, and that gulph fixed between them, which cannot be paſ-

ſed;

ſed; "And theſe"—ſuch as had neglected to perform works of charity—"theſe ſhall "go away into everlaſting puniſhment; "but the righteous," they who had performed them, "into life eternal." The brethren of Chriſt are before you — Make your choice.

DISCOURSE XIV.

THE PARALYTIC HEALED.

MATT. IX. 2.

And behold, they brought to him a man ſick of the palſy, lying on a bed: and Jeſus ſeeing their faith, ſaid unto the ſick of the palſy, Son, be of good cheer; thy ſins be forgiven thee.

THE active and elementary parts of nature, whereſoever they exiſt, will manifeſt themſelves by their effects; fire will warm, light will ſhine, aromatics will ſend forth ſweet odours. Jeſus, in like manner, on all occaſions diſcovers himſelf to be what his names implies, the SAVIOUR; leaving behind him, in every place,

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the warmth of fervent charity, the light of evangelical doctrine, and the fragrance of a good report concerning ſomething done for the benefit of man, and the glory of God. He goeth about, not to gratify or to profit himſelf, but to diffuſe his beneficence. He either teaches, or comforts, or raiſes from the dead, or heals, or feeds, or delivers, or departs into ſolitude to pray. And all for us. For us he preaches, that we may learn the truth; for us he heals, and performs other miracles, that we may believe him; for us no leſs he retires, for us he prays, for us he gives thanks to his Father. Thus he changes his ſituation often, his diſpoſition never; in this, as well as other things, "leaving us an example, that we ſhould fol-"low his ſteps," and not ſuffer any outward difference of circumſtances to make us forget our Chriſtian profeſſion.

The *Gergeſenes*, as we find by the concluſion of the preceding chapter, preferring the preſervation of their ſwine to the ſalvation of their ſouls, and therefore "de-

"ſiring

"firing him to depart out of their coaſts; "he entered into a ſhip, and paſſed over, "and came into his own city, Capernaum," *i. e.* the city not where he was born, but where he lived; a trafficking, luxurious, proud city; and for that reaſon, as mercy looks out for the miſerable, and a phyſician for them that are ſick, choſen by him; who, though the only man that ever was without ſin, diſdained not to dwell and converſe with ſinners, ſeeing he came to call ſuch to repentance.

Here it was that he performed the miracle mentioned in the text, which it is the deſign of the following diſcourſe firſt to *illuſtrate*, and then to *apply*.

It being "noiſed about" (as St. Mark in his account informs us) that Jeſus was returned to *Capernaum*, and was in a certain houſe in the town, "ſtraightway many "were gathered together, inſomuch that "there was no room to receive them, no not "ſo much as about the door; and he,"

DISC. XIV. who always rejoiced much more to teach than any could do to learn of him, "preached "ed the word" of life and ſalvation "to "them." The ſermon was with authority and power, and the audience very attentive.

But *behold* (for ſo St. Matthew introduces this miracle, and well worthy our *beholding* it will appear to be) an object on a ſudden preſented itſelf, which quickly engaged the notice of the ſpeaker, no leſs than that of the hearers. A bed, with a poor wretch confined to it by the palſy, was ſeen deſcending from the roof, till it came down into the room and reſted, where all that want reſt muſt find it, at the feet of Jeſus. Some good neighbours and friends of this unhappy man, it ſeems, who by the nature of his diſeaſe was rendered incapable of helping himſelf, were ſo kind as to carry him between four of them where they knew he might have relief. For it is plain, by the pains they took, that they had no doubt but Chriſt could and would heal him,

him, if they could only contrive to place ſuch a ſpectacle before his eyes. But here was the difficulty. For upon bringing their burden to the houſe, they found ſuch a crowd of people even about the door, that there was no room for a ſingle perſon more to get in, much leſs for four, with ſo ponderous and cumbrous a load. Men were not to be torn by any means from the lips of ſo eloquent a preacher, but were liſtening at the very doors and windows, to catch, if it were poſſible, ſomewhat of his doctrine. Such was, and ſuch ever ought to be the vehement and unfeigned deſire of hearing Chriſt's word, whenever it is preached. DISC. XIV.

What therefore is to be done? Shall they give it over, and return without having accompliſhed that for which they came? A lukewarm charity would have done ſo, contenting itſelf with the effort it had made, and concluding it impoſſible to do any thing more. But theſe men were not to be diſcouraged. They thought therefore of an expedient, and immediately put it in

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practice, the relation of which we cannot ſo well underſtand, without conſidering that the houſes in the eaſtern countries were built very low, and with a flat roof, in which there was a kind of trap door, as the inhabitants often uſed to go up from within, and ſpend ſome time upon the "houſe top," where we find "David "walking," and St. "Peter praying." The friends of the ſick man therefore having contrived to raiſe the bed to the roof (as it was not unuſual to have a paſſage likewiſe by ſtairs on the outſide of the houſe), they broke open the aforementioned door that was therein (faſtened probably on the inſide), and let down the bed, ſuſpended by ropes, into the midſt of the aſſembly, before Jeſus.

Behold then this ſad ſpectacle—not ſo properly a man as a corpſe. Of motion the diſeaſe deprived him; and without the power of motion, what is life? What avails it to have limbs, if they cannot be uſed? Nor does this diſtemper affect the extreme

extreme and exterior parts of the body only, but the tongue is tied, and the head disordered. The understanding is benumbed; the memory becomes like a leaky vessel, and loses all that was committed to it; the judgment is naught, and the vigour of the mind perished. Many diseases are noisome, many painful, but still the use of the limbs is not taken away; and in most the soul is still at liberty to perform her operations. But the object before us was deprived by the palsy of both. There he lies, those that carried him looking down from above, and the eyes of all in the room, we may be sure, fixed upon him. He falls not on his knees; he lifts not up his hands; he opens not his mouth; but his helpless condition was more effectual than if he had kneeled, his silence more eloquent than any prayer he could have put up. In the ears of *mercy* nothing speaks so powerfully as *misery*.

The meek and gracious Redeemer was not at all offended at being thus interrupted,

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but highly approves the *faith* of thoſe who had ſuch confidence in him, as to let no difficulties and diſcouragements prevent their laying the ſick man at his feet, in order to the obtaining of a cure. So much doth an operating, ſteady, perſevering faith avail, not only for ourſelves, but likewiſe for our poor ſick brethren and neighbours; whom it is our duty to preſent to Chriſt by our prayers, as the friends of the man ſick of the palſy preſented him. For here is nothing mentioned about *his* faith, but only that of his *bearers*—"Jeſus ſeeing *their* faith." And we have in St. James a promiſe of ſucceſs made more particularly to the prayers of the prieſts in ſuch caſes.—"Is any ſick "among you? let him call for the elders of "the church, and let them pray over him, "and the prayer of faith ſhall ſave the ſick, "and the Lord ſhall raiſe him up." But the duty of interceding for the afflicted—incumbent on all—cannot be more forcibly recommended than by this circumſtance of the miracle before us. Nor indeed will it ever be known, till the day of judgment, how

how many thouſand bleſſings both temporal and ſpiritual have been brought down by the effectual fervent prayers of the faithful on the heads of ſuch as, like the poor paralytic, could not pray for themſelves. DISC. XIV.

And now it might be expected, that Jeſus would by the word of his power command the ſick man immediately to "ariſe and walk." But inſtead of addreſſing him upon the ſubject of his bodily diſorder, he ſays to him—"Son, be of good "cheer; thy ſins be forgiven thee." Here was the proof of an able and experienced phyſician, who would not ſkin the wound over, but ſtrike directly at the root, and remove the cauſe of the malady, which was SIN. For had man never *ſinned*, he had never been *ſick*. Sickneſs is a part of the curſe inflicted on diſobedience; and thither the holy pſalmiſt has taught us to recur in all our viſitations—ſaying, "When thou with "rebukes doſt chaſten man for ſin, thou "makeſt his beauty to conſume away, like "as it were a moth fretting a garment.

"Every

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" Every man therefore," becauſe every man has ſinned, " is but vanity," a creature of no ſtability and ſtrength, but preſently fretted and worn down by ſickneſs, as the beſt and faireſt cloth is, when the moth has once got into it. He therefore that would be healed of his ſickneſs, ſhould apply for the pardon of his ſins. And to whom ſhould he go for a perfect cure of both, but to him who firſt " ſaid to the ſick of " the palſy, Son, thy ſins are forgiven " thee;" and then—" Ariſe, take up thy " bed, and go to thine houſe?"

But, alas, the remiſſion of ſins by Jeſus Chriſt, though the greateſt and moſt glorious of all the divine mercies, and the ground and foundation of the reſt, yet being not, like a cure wrought on the body, outward, and viſible, and perceivable by the ſenſes, is often lightly ſet by and ſcoffed at by proud and worldly men. As in the caſe before us, no ſooner had Chriſt ſaid, " thy " ſins are forgiven thee," but " certain of " the Scribes and Phariſees," who were preſent,

ſent, "began to reaſon in their hearts— DISC. XIV.
"Who is this that ſpeaketh blaſphemies?
"Who can forgive ſins but God only?"
Who indeed? But does it follow, thou blind and envious Phariſee, that he blaſphemeth who came into the world, as the law and the prophets foretold he ſhould, to "ſave his people from their ſins," and who ſhewed himſelf poſſeſſed of almighty power by the works he daily and hourly wrought in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem? It is true, doubtleſs, that God only can forgive ſins. But why then is not the only juſt and right concluſion drawn, viz. that he who does forgive them by his own power, and who demonſtrates to ſenſe that he does ſo, by removing the pains and penalties inflicted on their account—that he, I ſay, is *very God*, though he appears in the form of a man—"God manifeſt in the fleſh, to "deſtroy the works of the devil?"

But ſuch was the exceeding hardneſs of theſe men's hearts, that though Chriſt vouchſafed them two moſt convincing proofs

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proofs of his Divinity, yet neither ſo believed they on him. Firſt, he anſwered to their *thoughts*, thereby ſhewing himſelf to be one "who ſearcheth the hearts and "reins," the peculiar prerogative of God. "Jeſus knowing their thoughts, ſaid, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" Secondly, by releaſing the ſick man, in a moment, and by a word ſpeaking, from a diſeaſe inflicted as a puniſhment for ſin, he demonſtrated to all the world the authority and power he had to pronounce the ſentence, "Thy ſins are forgiven thee." "Whether," ſays he, "is eaſier to ſay, "Thy ſins are forgiven thee, or to ſay, "Ariſe, and walk?" Both, bleſſed Jeſus, are equally impoſſible to any one but a God of almighty power, and infinite mercy, who firſt made man, and then redeemed him. Such therefore we acknowlege thee to be who ſaidſt — "That ye may know "the ſon of man hath power on earth to "forgive ſins—Ariſe, take up thy bed, and "go to thine houſe." *i. e.* You ſhall ſee a divine power go along with my words to heal

heal an outward and viſible diſeaſe of the body, that ye may no longer doubt of the ſame divine power going along with them to work the inward and ſpiritual cure of the ſoul by the remiſſion of ſins. Accordingly no ſooner were the words ſpoken but the ſick man inſtantly "aroſe, took up "that whereon he lay, and departed to his "houſe," no longer mute, but "glorifying "God," perhaps in the words of the ciii[d] pſalm, for words better adapted to his caſe cannot be conceived—"Praiſe the Lord, "O my ſoul, and all that is within me "praiſe his holy name. Praiſe the Lord, "O my ſoul, and forget not all his bene-"fits: Who forgiveth all thy ſins, and "healeth all thine infirmities." Can a miracle be more complete, more glorious than this? What have the Phariſees to ſay? Do they yet doubt whether this man's ſins are forgiven him; and whether God is in Jeſus to forgive them? They are ſilent, as if the palſy, like Naaman's leproſy cleaving to Gehazi, when it left the man, had ſeized upon them, and the opening of his mouth had

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had been the closing of theirs. But as our Lord once said, that if his disciples were to be silent, the very stones would cry out, rather than that God should want the honour due unto his name; so though these men, swelling with malice and envy, sate speechless, neither willing to commend, nor able to find fault, yet the hearts of the common people, more generous and open to conviction, were touched at once upon seeing the paralytic leap off his bed, whole and sound, and walk away with it upon his shoulders—"And they were all amazed, "and said, We have seen strange things to-"day—we never saw it on this fashion. And "they glorified God:" which that we may all be the more effectually moved to do, let us

II^dly. Make an application of this miracle to ourselves.

For it must be considered, that bodily diseases, as they were introduced by sin, so are they pictures and representations of corresponding disorders produced by the same sin

ſin in our ſouls, which thereby became ſubject to the *fever* of anger, the *dropſy* of covetouſneſs, the *leproſy* of uncleanneſs, the *lunacy* of ambition, and, among other maladies, to the *palſy* of ſpiritual ſloth and liſtleſſneſs in things pertaining to the work of our ſalvation. This is the laſt of thoſe called "the ſeven deadly ſins;" and when it ſeizes upon the man, it takes away the uſe of his powers and faculties in matters ſpiritual, exactly as the palſy does in matters temporal. His nerves are unſtrung, and he is under an abſolute inability to work out his ſalvation, and walk in the way of God's commandments. His hands can neither be lifted up to heaven in devotion, or ſtretched out to the poor in charity. His feet cannot ſupport or carry him forward in a courſe of holy duties. His tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, when it ſhould utter prayers or praiſes to God, or inſtruct and comfort, reprove, or exhort his neighbour. His underſtanding likewiſe is dull and heavy, when the doctrines of ſalvation are propoſed to it; his memory retaineth not divine truths; and

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and the vigour of his ſpirit is departed. His will is chained down to the creature, nor can by any human means be diſengaged from the earth: and what is worſt of all, the man labouring under this mental or intellectual palſy, and brought down by it to the gates of eternal death, ſeems to himſelf all the while to thrive and flouriſh, becauſe he has perhaps riches, and honours, and pleaſures in poſſeſſion, and can baſk himſelf in the ſunſhine of this world, ſaying to his poor ſoul in this moſt wretched condition, "Soul, thou haſt goods laid up for many "years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be "merry." But ſuffer not, O man, the world and the good things thereof to deceive thee to thy deſtruction. They may increaſe the diſorder, and haſten thy miſerable end. Thy true condition can only be judged of by the ſtate of thy ſoul. Turn thine eyes inward, and ſee whether the deſcription juſt given belongs to it. If it does, then behold and acknowlege thy picture in "the "man ſick of the palſy lying on a bed;" and thou wilt preſently cry out, if thou art not

not quite overcome of the diſtemper, "O "wretched man that I am! who ſhall de- "liver me from the body of this death?" I anſwer—yea, thou wilt return anſwer to thyſelf, if thou conſidereſt this miracle aright—"I thank God, through Jeſus "Chriſt our Lord." DISC. XIV.

For by the wonderful cure wrought upon the body of this poor man, we are taught where to have recourſe when the palſy has ſeized the ſoul. He who ſaid, "Ariſe and "walk," ſaid likewiſe, "Thy ſins be for- "given thee;" and his word was with equal power in both caſes. Nor is it poſſible that he who vouchſafed to heal the more baſe and ignoble part of man, his body, ſhould neglect his precious and immortal ſoul. All therefore that are ſpiritually "ſick of the palſy" muſt apply to Chriſt. No difficulties and diſcouragements muſt deter them. Some how or other they muſt appear before him, or elſe they periſh. If they are not able to go to him of themſelves by repentance and faith, let

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them beg the aſſiſtance of kind and charitable friends, who may direct and convey them to him by godly counſel and advice, and by their prayers. More eſpecially "let "them ſend for the elders of the church," whoſe continual employment it is to preſent ſinners to Chriſt, and who, like the friends of the man ſick of the palſy, ſhould never deſiſt from their labour of love, but uſe an holy violence in their endeavours, till they have laid their patients at the feet of Jeſus, and prevailed for a cure. And ſurely, if the ſon of man on earth, in his mortal and afflicted ſtate of humiliation, had power to forgive ſins, with how much greater confidence may ſinners approach him now that he has died and riſen again for them, and ſitteth on the throne of glory and grace, inveſted with all the rights and powers of a prieſt and interceſſor for evermore? Moſt certainly, whoſoever cometh, or is brought to him, in full faith and confidence of his mercy and power, as GOD THE SAVIOUR, ſhall in no wiſe be caſt out, but ſhall be made whole of his plague. He ſhall hear

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the voice of Jeſus ſaying to him by his word, by the abſolution of the church, and the teſtimony of his conſcience through the holy Ghoſt—"Son, be of good cheer; "thy ſins be forgiven thee. Ariſe, take "up thy bed, and go to thine houſe:" And, DISC. XIV.

Laſtly, my brethren, the reality of the cure of the ſpiritual palſy will be demonſtrated to all the world exactly as that performed upon the body of the paralytic was by what followed when Chriſt had ſpoken theſe words to him. Straightway "he aroſe, took up "that whereon he lay, and" (regardleſs of the cenſures and calumnies of the ſcribes and phariſees) "departed to his houſe glorify-"ing God," the people around him doing the ſame. This will be the proceſs with every one who by the mighty power and infinite mercy of the Redeemer is healed, upon application to him of his inability to good, his ſloth, and liſtleſſneſs, his criminal attachment to the creature. He will *ariſe* forthwith, and as it were ſtand up-

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right, ſhewing that he now enjoys the uſe of his powers and faculties, and is in a poſture to execute the will of God. "He "who cannot riſe and ſtand upright, but "either continues groveling on the earth, or "falls back as ſoon as he gets up, is not yet "cured of his ſpiritual palſy. The ſinner's "*bed* is every thing which he loves, and in "which he finds his reſt and ſatisfaction "upon earth; his criminal inclinations, and "the objects of his paſſions: a true con-"verſion *takes up* and carries away every "thing of this nature[a]." And now being thus ariſen, in ſome ſort, from the dead, the man begins to lead a new life, a life of vigour and activity, ſetting forward in the path of life, the way of God's commandments, to "go to his houſe" not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Nor will he ſuffer himſelf to be ſtopped in his progreſs by the ſneers, and ſcoffs, and calumnies of thoſe who have in them the ſpirit of the ſcribes and phariſees, and are

[a] QUESNELL.

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ever ready to detract from the glory of Christ, and to laugh at the remission of sins, and the conversion of the sinner. None of these things will move the true penitent from his purpose, or prevent his "glorifying God" openly and before men for his mercy and goodness towards him, in his redemption from the guilt and power of sin through his Saviour Christ, both God and man. The consequence of which will be, that others will be led thereby to give glory to the God of heaven, for the mighty and wonderful work that he hath done, in restoring health and salvation to a diseased and lost soul. For surely nothing but great blindness of mind, want of faith, and love of this life, can make men rejoice more at a bodily cure, than at the conversion of a soul from sin to righteousness; a work, which is indeed spiritual and invisible, and for that reason perhaps the less regarded; but it is a work that far surpasses all the miracles wrought upon matter — a work, to accomplish which, the Son of God died; and to celebrate which, the angels tune their

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golden harps to everlaſting Hallelujahs—"Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave "ſinners:" and "there is joy in heaven, "among the angels of God, over one ſin-"ner that repenteth." Which joy therefore let us labour to increaſe, while it is in our power, by ariſing from all ſloth and inactivity of ſpirit, and walking in all holineſs and righteouſneſs, without being weary or faint in our minds, until we come to the home and houſe of eternal reſt, through him who ſays to every true penitent and ſincere believer, in the perſon of the "man ſick of the palſy—Son, be of good "cheer; thy ſins be forgiven thee. Ariſe, "take up thy bed, and go to thine houſe." To him, with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed, &c.

DISCOURSE XV.

ON THE TWENTY-NINTH OF MAY.

PSALM LXXXVII. 2.

The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

WHEN we take a view of the revolutions [a] that have happened in the kingdoms of the world, and behold

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[a] Equidem paradoxum quid dixero; et nihilominus vere: Imperia omnia mundi ſecundum Dei Providentiam ſic fuiſſe ordinata, ut ſubſervirent conſilio Dei erga eccleſiam, nec eorum diſſolutionem aut deſtructionem alio referendam; ut proinde eorum deſtructio, qualis fuit Perſarum, certo fuerit argumentum, illud non ſatisfeciſſe conſilio Dei erga eccleſiam; nec populum ſuum ea æquitate, juſtitia, et indulgentia tractaſſe, qua par erat.

VITRINGA Comment. in Zach. i. 20. 203.

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mighty empires ſucceſſively riſing and diſappearing again, like ſo many waves in this great and wide ſea, where, exalted for a little ſeaſon to the higheſt pitch of grandeur, they glitter in the ſunſhine of proſperity, till they are overwhelmed and abſorbed by the growing power of ſome neighbouring people, who themſelves are ſcarcely gazed at, before they depart and give way to others, as others did to them, we are led thereby to admire and adore the providence of him who ruleth in the kingdoms of men, who putteth down one and ſetteth up another, ordering all things according to the counſel of his own will. But when from the Scriptures of truth we learn what the counſel of that will is, and how gracious an aſpect it bears towards the ſervants of the true GOD; when we ſee all things, even the moſt untractable, working together for good to them that believe, and the powers of the earth made ſubſervient to the kingdom of the Meſſiah, in carrying on the divine diſpenſations of mercy and judgment towards the church, as her obedience

pleads

pleads for the one, or her tranſgreſſions call for the other, how are our hearts filled and warmed with a ſenſe of his goodneſs, who makes the world and all the perſons and things in it conſpire to promote the felicity of his choſen, who governs the univerſe as head of his church, who loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob! DISC. XV.

It ſhall be my endeavour, in the following diſcourſe, to ſet before you a ſuccinct view of the divine œconomy in the government of the world, conſidered in this light, viz. as relative to the affairs of the church. The mercies we this day commemorate will cloſe an induction of particulars, and the uſe we are to make of them be the natural and obvious reſult of the whole.

But ſhall we not be ſaid to aggrandize the church, to think of her more highly than we ought to think, when we thus repreſent the kings of the earth as miniſtering unto her, and put all things as it were under her feet? This may be ſaid. But

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DISC. XV. it will be ſaid by none who have duly weighed the difference between things temporal and things eternal, and have learned to give the preference where it is ſo evidently due. The commiſſion of political government extends no farther than this world. Every man's death diſſolves his relation to an earthly kingdom, and all civil diſtinctions drop into the duſt together. But, as ſays the Apoſtle, ημων πολιτευμα, "our citizenſhip is in heaven," from whence St. John ſaw the Chriſtian Church, "that "holy city, the new Jeruſalem, deſcend," and whither ſhe will again be received up, nay, whither ſhe is continually aſcending, the triumphant part of her, as well as her all-glorious head, being there already. Hence it is, that the church even upon earth is ſtyled "the kingdom of GOD;" the ſpirits departed and the faithful who remain being alike the ſubjects of it, and together making up what the Apoſtle calls the whole family of heaven and earth named after Chriſt; who, as he now ratifies in heaven the ſentence of the church when

when juſtly inflicted on earth, ſo will he one day enable her to "execute judgment" on the angels as well as on this world, ſeeing her head is Lord of them all. They are not "members of his body, of his fleſh, "and of his bones; for he took not on him "the nature of angels, but he took on him "the ſeed of Abraham;" to whom they are "all miniſtering ſpirits, ſent forth to "miniſter to them who," through the faith of their father Abraham, "are heirs "of ſalvation." What wonder then that we find theſe exceeding great and precious promiſes made to the church, with relation to the kingdoms of the earth:—"Kings "ſhall be thy nurſing fathers, and queens "thy nurſing mothers; they ſhall bow "down to thee with their face towards the "earth, and lick up the duſt of thy feet. "The ſons alſo of them that afflicted thee "ſhall come bending unto thee, and all "they that deſpiſed thee ſhall bow them-"ſelves down at the ſoles of thy feet, and "they ſhall call thee the city of the Lord, the "Zion of the holy one of Iſrael. Therefore "thy

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" thy gates ſhall be open continually; they " ſhall not be ſhut day nor night, that men " may bring unto thee the forces of the " Gentiles, and that their kings may be " brought: for the nation and kingdom " that will not ſerve thee ſhall periſh; yea, " thoſe nations ſhall be utterly waſted." Thus glorious are the things ſpoken of thee, thou city of GOD. May we not then take up our parable like Balaam, and ſay— Surely there is no enchantment againſt Jacob, neither is there any divination againſt Iſrael. How ſhall we degrade her, whom GOD hath ſo highly exalted? How ſhall we lightly eſteem her, whom the King of heaven thus delighteth to honour? We cannot do it, until we have forgotten who it was that died to redeem her.

Let none therefore be offended, but rather let all greatly rejoice, and glorify GOD on this behalf, when they find the affairs of the kingdoms and empires of the earth directed and diſpoſed by an unſeen hand in ſuch a manner as may beſt comport with her

her intereſts, for whom the world itſelf was created, and is preſerved. Her foundations, as they are to laſt when the world is ended, ſo were they laid before it began, as the Scriptures teſtify, when they tell us, that "we are ſaved and called according to the "divine purpoſe and grace given us in "Chriſt Jeſus before the world began;" when they aſſure us, that GOD "hath "choſen us from the beginning;" when they ſtyle the Goſpel "the everlaſting co-"venant," and Chriſt, "the Lamb ſlain "from the foundation of the world." Creation was poſterior to the covenant of grace, and the firſt ſtep in the execution of it. The world was enjoyed but for a little ſeaſon by man in his ſtate of innocence, and has ever ſince ſympathized with him in the miſery of his fall, but is ſtill preſerved as the ſcene on which the mighty work of his redemption is carrying on, until it be finally accompliſhed. At that day and hour cometh the end. When the fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhall be come in, and all the Iſrael of GOD ſhall be ſaved, the heavens ſhall paſs away

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away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat; the earth alſo and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up.

Nor indeed can we proceed far in the ſacred hiſtory, before we meet with an awful exemplification of this great truth, a ſtupendous prelude to that final deſtruction which awaits the world, and to that complete ſalvation which is then to be wrought for the church. When the earth was defiled by the abominations of it's inhabitants, when the ſins of men had burſt the fountains of the great deep, and opened the windows of heaven, and called forth a deluge to cleanſe her from her corruptions; when neither the riches of the wealthy, nor the power of the mighty, nor the wiſdom of the wiſe could ſave them a ſingle moment from the hand of death; — then appeared the ineſtimable privileges of the faithful, the incomparable pre-eminence of the church. Small and contemptible as ſhe then ſeemed, being reduced to the holy family

mily in the ark, yet, ſafe in the protection of her GOD, ſhe weathered the ſtorm which laid the world in ruins, and rode in triumph over the wreck of univerſal nature. New heavens, as it were, and a new earth aroſe, for her ſake, out of the confuſion of the old; the covenant was renewed; ſhe was bid to look upon the rainbow, and remember the promiſe; the morning ſtars once more ſang together, and all the ſons of GOD ſhouted for joy. DISC. XV.

In the diſperſion of the nations from Babel, regard was had to the after diſpoſition of things in the Iſraelitiſh church; for which reaſon Moſes begins his ſong with it. "When the moſt High divided "to the nations their inheritance, when he "ſeparated the ſons of Adam, he ſet the "bounds of the people according to the "number of the children of Iſrael."

Who can read the lives of thoſe fathers of our faith, the ancient patriarchs, "when "they were but few men in number, yea "very

DISC. XV. "very few, and ſtrangers in the land," without perceiving how highly they were accounted of in the ſight of GOD? "He "ſuffered no man to do them wrong, yea, "he reproved kings for their ſakes; ſaying, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my "prophets no harm." They were honoured in the kingdoms through which they paſſed as mighty princes of GOD: when injured, they put to flight through faith the armies of aliens; they were ſuffered to intercede for ſinful cities, and ſuch as belonged to the holy family were ſent out of the overthrow, when the deſtruction of thoſe cities, by the enormity of the crimes of the inhabitants, was rendered inevitable: they were made inſtruments of preſerving whole nations alive in the time of dearth, of informing princes concerning the will of heaven, and teaching ſenators true wiſdom; they were revered by crowned heads, and Pharaoh diſdained not to receive a bleſſing from Jacob.

Egypt, at that time one of the moſt renowned

nowned and mighty kingdoms of the earth, was appointed to be the ſcene, firſt of the chaſtiſement, and then of the deliverance of the people of GOD, by a ſeries of the moſt aſtoniſhing miracles that ever were wrought in favour of Iſrael. A new king aroſe, who knew not Joſeph, but looked with an evil eye on the proſperity of the church, as likely in time to prove detrimental to the ſtate, forgetting that GOD protects thoſe who protect her. Worldly wiſdom choſe rather to riſk his diſpleaſure by oppreſſing her, by ſetting over her taſkmaſters to afflict her with burdens, and by making the lives of her children bitter with hard bondage. But the ſighs and cries of the afflicted church came up before GOD, and the vengeance of Heaven ſoon demonſtrated the folly of the Egyptian politics. The Lord awaked as one out of ſleep, and made bare his arm in the defence of his people. The wretched monarch ſtill withſtood the power which controlled all the operations of nature, and hardened his heart againſt the goodneſs which by ſo doing called him to

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repentance. The event was, as it ever will be in the end, that the church was delivered, and her oppreſſors deſtroyed. The Egyptians ſank like lead in the mighty waters, while Iſrael, ſtanding triumphant on the oppoſite ſhore, ſang hallelujahs to the Lord GOD omnipotent.

Iſrael thus brought out of Egypt was conducted through the wilderneſs, the ſame Lord being her light and her ſalvation, her ſupport and refreſhment, and came to the borders of Canaan at the preciſe time when the iniquity of the Amorites was full, and the harveſt ready for the ſickle. The judgment therefore determined was executed upon them by the ſword of Joſhua, or rather the ſword of GOD in his hand. For as it was Jehovah who "overthrew Pharaoh "and his hoſt in the Red Sea," and "led "his people through the wilderneſs," ſo was it he who "ſmote great nations, "and ſlew mighty kings, Sihon king of "the Amorites, and Og the king of Baſan, "and all the kingdoms of Canaan." The

promiſe,

promiſe, "I will never leave thee nor for- DISC. XV.
"ſake thee," was made good. The power of faith prevailed to the caſting down of ſtrong holds, and the blaſt of the trumpets from the mouths of the prieſts, ſounded by divine command, was ſufficient to level the walls of Jericho.

After the ſettlement of the people in the promiſed inheritance, the nations around them were from time to time made the inſtruments of puniſhing them when they rebelled againſt the Lord their GOD. When they returned to him, his favour returned to them, the light of his countenance quickly diſpelled the darkeſt clouds of public calamity, and brake forth upon them by the means of deliverers raiſed up to chaſtiſe the inſolence of their enemies, and reſtore peace and proſperity to Iſrael. But the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, of Jepthah, and of David, who having ſubdued all his enemies, left his ſon Solomon in a manner univerſal monarch over the whole earth, all the kings of which, as it

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is ſaid in the book of Chronicles, ſought his preſence. And indeed the glory of his reign ſo far exceeds that of any which we hear of before or after it, that Iſrael in his days ſeems intended to give us ſome idea of the church triumphant, as ſhe will appear when, the laſt enemy being vanquiſhed, and death ſwallowed up in victory, the ſon of David ſhall manifeſt himſelf in the new Jeruſalem as the prince of peace, and reign for ever and ever, king of kings, and lord of lords.

From this time, we find the Almighty employing, in their turns, the four great monarchies, to protect or annoy, to cheriſh or chaſtiſe the church, as there was occaſion. And we hear him making in effect by his prophets the ſame declaration concerning each of them, that he made before by the mouth of Moſes concerning Pharaoh. "In "very deed, for this cauſe have I raiſed "thee up, to ſhew in thee my power, and "that my name may be declared through "all the earth."

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The idolatries and iniquities of the ten tribes, conſequent upon their defection from the houſe of David, and the temple at Jeruſalem, called for vengeance. And lo! the Aſſyrian ſtands ready to execute it, waiting only for the divine command. At the time appointed it is given. The Lord lifteth up an enſign to the nations from afar, and muſtereth the hoſts to the battle, making them the weapons of his indignation to deſtroy the whole land. Becauſe the children of Iſrael had ſinned againſt the Lord their GOD, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, therefore the Lord was very angry with Iſrael, and removed them out of his ſight. They returned no more to that pleaſant land, nor ſaw again their native country. What a fine inſtance does the Aſſyrian afford us of the manner in which Providence, uſing the inſtrumentality of man's free choice foreſeen, cauſes all the ſchemes of worldly politicians to work together for the accompliſhment of his deſigns, while they are only attending to their own intereſts! DISC. XV.

DISC. XV. For thus GOD ſtates this matter, once for all, by his prophet Iſaiah—"O Aſſyrian, "the rod of mine anger, and the ſtaff in "their hand is mine indignation. I will "ſend him againſt an hypocritical nation, "and againſt the people of my wrath will "I give him a charge to take the ſpoil, "and to take the prey, and to tread them "down like the mire of the ſtreets. How-"beit he meaneth not ſo, neither doth his "heart think ſo, but it is in his heart to "deſtroy and cut off nations not a few." The proud Aſſyrian knew not what Iſaiah could have told him, that "when the Lord "had performed" by him "his whole "work," of correcting his people, he would "puniſh his ſtout heart, and the glory of "his high looks;" nor ſaw the abſurdity of "the ax boaſting itſelf againſt him that "heweth therewith." View him before the walls of Jeruſalem, at the head of an army preſumed to be invincible, opening his mouth in blaſphemy againſt GOD, and already rioting in the fancied poſſeſſion and ſpoil of the holy city. But the time was not

yet

yet come. A prince filled the throne who knew where to have recourſe for aſſiſtance, and how to engage Heaven on his ſide. Therefore "the virgin, the daughter of "Zion, deſpiſed" the tyrant, "and laughed "him to ſcorn, the daughter of Jeruſalem "ſhook her head at him." Suddenly, in the dark and ſilent hour of midnight, without noiſe or violence, the flower of the Aſſyrian army is cut off at a ſtroke. The Almighty puts his hook in the noſe, his bridle in the lips of the blaſpheming infidel, and leads him back diſarmed like a wild beaſt taken in the toils, the contempt and hiſſing of thoſe nations, who had ſo lately trembled at his power and majeſty. DISC. XV.

But at length Judah's hour came. The tranſgreſſions of her kings, of her prieſts, and of her people, which had made the whole head ſick, and the whole heart faint, required a ſtrong and efficacious medicine. Her corruptions were become ſuch as could not be purged away but by the ſpirit of judgment and the ſpirit of burning, and ſhe

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was to drink deep of the cup of the Lord's fury. The haughty and terrible Nebuchadnezzar was the perſon appointed to adminiſter it, and ſhe drank it off to the dregs. Jeruſalem is laid in aſhes, and her children go into captivity. In the ſchool of affliction they are taught the leſſon of repentance. By the waters of Babylon they ſate down and wept, wept over the miſeries of the church, and the ſins that cauſed them; yea they wept when they remembered Zion, when they remembered what ſhe had been, and ſaw what ſhe was. Deſolate and forlorn, ſhe now ſits upon the ground who was once exalted above all the earth, and calls to the whole world to ſee if ever there was ſorrow like her ſorrow, and to receive inſtruction by her fall. Her lamentations by the mouth of Jeremiah are recorded for the uſe of all who may find themſelves in the like circumſtances, if they prove not ſufficient to prevent men from falling into them. Yet even here GOD left not himſelf without witneſs, nor his church without honour. The irreſiſtible monarch, whoſe pride

pride made him ready to propoſe himſelf as an object of worſhip to all people, and nations, and languages, falls down at the feet of a Jew; Daniel is made firſt of the preſidents, and a prophet rules in the province of Babylon; while the abaſement of that prince, by the judgment of GOD, even to the condition of the beaſts of the field, ſeemed to prognoſticate the fall of the empire, which came to paſs in the days of his grandſon.

For now, Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, having performed the taſk allotted her, was to be overthrown as Sodom and Gomorrah; the ſtaff wherewith the Lord had ſmitten ſo many nations, the hammer which had broken the whole earth to pieces, was to be itſelf cut aſunder, and broken, and the ſceptre of the world tranſferred to the ſecond great monarchy, that of the MEDES and PERSIANS. To this end we ſee raiſed up a prince with a diſpoſition calculated to conciliate the affections

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tions of all nations, improved and trained up in a diſcipline which has been the admiration of every age ſince, reducing to practice all the maxims of political wiſdom which he had been taught, and proſperous in all his undertakings, until by the taking of Babylon he had brought down to the ground, and laid low in the duſt, that inſolent ſpirit which characteriſed the Chaldean empire. This tranſaction profane hiſtory relates at large. But the drift of Providence in it had never been known, if the Scriptures had not opened to us, through the divine œconomy in this affair, a proſpect terminated by the reſtoration of the church of GOD, who ſaith of Cyrus, many hundred years before his birth, "He is my "ſhepherd, and ſhall perform all my plea-"ſure, even ſaying to Jeruſalem, Thou ſhalt "be built, and to the temple, Thy founda-"tions ſhall be laid. I have raiſed him up "in righteouſneſs, and I will direct all his "ways: he ſhall build my city, and he "ſhall let go my captives, not for price, "nor reward, ſaith the Lord of hoſts. For

"Jacob

" Jacob my ſervant's ſake, and for Iſrael DISC.
" mine elect, I have even called thee by XV.
" thy name: I have ſirnamed thee, though
" thou haſt not known me." Accordingly, in the very " firſt year of his reign," (after having been ſhewed, as we muſt ſuppoſe, by Daniel, whom he found in the court of Babylon, theſe prophecies of Iſaiah concerning himſelf) " he made a proclamation
" throughout all his kingdom, and put it
" alſo in writing, ſaying, Thus ſaith Cy-
" rus, king of Perſia, all the kingdoms of
" the earth hath the Lord GOD of heaven
" given me, and he hath charged me to
" build him an houſe in Jeruſalem which
" is in Judah: Who is there among you
" of all his people? The Lord his GOD be
" with him, and let him go up." For this cauſe therefore was the Perſian monarchy ſuffered to be erected, becauſe Jehovah was become gracious unto his land, and had determined to make Cyrus his inſtrument in bringing back the captivity of Jacob.

But in proceſs of time this empire having begun

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begun under the tyrant Ochus to perſecute the church which it had till then protected, was not long after broken in pieces by the king of GRÆCIA, or Alexander the Great, the founder of the third monarchy, whoſe fury againſt Jeruſalem, for refuſing the ſuccours he demanded, was on a ſudden, at the ſight of the high prieſt coming forth in his veſtments at the head of a proceſſion to meet him, turned into a reverence for the temple, and an admiration of the prophecies; in which ſeeing himſelf plainly pourtrayed, he marched on againſt Darius to certain victory; and having thus performed the work for the execution of which GOD had raiſed him up, was thrown aſide as a withered rod, dying at Babylon in the 33d year of his age. The carrying away of the Jews to the number of 100,000 into Egypt under Ptolemy Lagos, one of his ſucceſſors, and the cruelties of Antiochus Epiphanes, a deſcendant of another of them, ſerved only, the former to diffuſe the knowlege of the GOD of Iſrael among the nations preparatory to their converſion by the Goſpel;

pel; the latter to manifeſt the power of that GOD, and to call forth the glories of the Aſmonean family[a]. DISC. XV.

In their days, as we find by the book of Maccabees, the firſt league was made with the ROMAN power, which was ere long to conſtitute the fourth and laſt monarchy, and was now grown ſtrong enough to protect the church againſt the kings of Syria, as it did for many years. But when the Jews had forſaken the GOD of their fathers to go after their own traditions, and had at length filled up the meaſure of their iniquities by rejecting their Meſſiah, after he had accompliſhed all their prophecies, crucifying the Lord of glory, and perſecuting his apoſtles, the ſpirit of life paſſed from the Law into the Goſpel, and left their religion a breathleſs carcaſe: directed by Heaven, the Roman eagles flew to the prey, and Jeruſalem was deſtroyed with a deſtruction which aſtoniſhed the ſoul of Titus himſelf, and hath made the ears of every

[a] See VITRINGA in Zach. p. 205.

one

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one that hath heard it to tingle from that day to this [b]. The Roman empire, which, by uniting all nations under it's government, prepared the way for the univerſality of the true religion, having thus been by turns the protector and exterminator of the Jewiſh, the perſecutor and the defender of the Chriſtian church, was itſelf, like all the empires that had gone before it, broken in pieces, firſt by it's diviſion into eaſtern and weſtern; then by an inundation of the barbarians ſubdividing it into theſe weſtern kingdoms, which, though changing occaſionally by ſmall acceſſions or diminutions, ſtill ſubſiſt; and, laſtly, by the Mahometan power, raiſed up to be the Pharaoh, the Nebuchadnezzar, and the Antiochus Epiphanes of theſe laſt days to the eaſtern churches. And if the princes of this

[b] The Goſpel, receiving ſtrength from every ſucceſſive perſecution, at length conquered the conquerors of the world; the deſpiſed and ignominious croſs of the poor afflicted Galilean was engraved upon the foreheads of princes, and became the great ornament and glory of the imperial diadem.

Cauſes of the fall of the Roman empire, BOSSUET ii. 184.

weſtern

weſtern diviſion ſhall go on to weaken and deſtroy each other, while nothing is done to revive the ſpirit and power of the Goſpel in Chriſtendom (for when they are departed, a mere name will avail us as little as it did the Jews, or the Greek Chriſtians), may it not be feared that the weſtern empire will one day follow the fate of the eaſtern, and the creſcent be ſeen flying on the towers of Vienna, as well as on thoſe of Conſtantinople? ſince it ſeems hardly to admit of a doubt, that the Mahometan empire is the laſt and great antichriſtian power raiſed and ſupported to be the ſcourge of apoſtate Chriſtians; which, when it ſhall have performed the taſk allotted it, the Lord ſhall conſume with the ſpirit of his mouth, and deſtroy with the brightneſs of his coming; when the kingdoms of this world ſhall finally become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Chriſt, and the ſuperiority of his church over them all ſhall be as viſible as it is certain. DISC. XV.

Thus, by going into the ſanctuary of God,

DISC. XV. GOD, we ſee the end of all earthly glory, and behold the empires of the world paſſing ſwiftly by us, and vaniſhing away, to give place to that kingdom which ſhall endure for ever: while GOD, by ſuffering them to continue no longer than he had occaſion to employ them in the ſervice of the church, gives us a clear evidence that they were raiſed up for this end. It is here that we are to look for the ſecret ſpring of all victories and overthrows; here we are to ſearch after the true cauſe of the riſe and ruin of ſtates; which, with the renowned conductors of them, whether in peace or in war, are but ſo many inſtruments in the hand of Heaven, to execute it's deſigns of mercy or judgment on the church, and on each other in ſubordination to her, as they reſpectively from time to time become the objects of either, according to the uniform tenor of the divine œconomy from the beginning to the end of the world.

With regard to this nation in particular, and the manner in which the deſigns of provi-

providence concerning the church have been brought about by the revolutions that have happened in the ſtate, it is obvious to obſerve, that as the conqueſt of Britain by the Romans opened a way for the Goſpel to viſit it at firſt, ſo the invaſion of it afterwards by the Saxons, who, having overcome the ſinful inhabitants, were themſelves converted to the faith by Auſtin, became a means of the revival and re-eſtabliſhment of that Goſpel. At the head of the many bleſſings ſince beſtowed upon us will that of this day for ever ſtand in the eſtimation of all thoſe who have pleaſure in the proſperity of Sion; who love to behold her in her apoſtolical form and comelineſs, as ſhe appeared in the days of old, and in the years that are paſt, before ſchiſm had mangled and hereſy defaced the beauty of holineſs. In GOD's dealings with the church of England, reſtored as at this time by the reſtoration of the royal family, we behold an epitome of his former proceedings with regard to the church in general. We behold a power raiſed up to af-

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flict and chaſtiſe her, and then deſtroying itſelf to pave the way for her deliverance and recovery. But ſome circumſtances there are which diſtinguiſh this diſpenſation, and deſerve to be carefully marked. The avenger came not upon us from without, but aroſe from amongſt ourſelves. It was not an open enemy that did us this diſhonour, for then we could have borne it. The ſorrow only had then been ours. But, alas, the guilt was ſo too. The aſſault was made not, as formerly, by heathen and infidel powers, in profeſt oppoſition to the Goſpel, but by ſome who (if the people would take their word for it) were the only true Goſpel preachers; and who, by a ſtrange inverſion of Scripture, having appropriated to themſelves the character of the *Iſrael* of GOD, applied all the prophecies concerning *Egypt*, *Babylon*, and the other enemies of *Iſrael*, to the church and the monarchy. The grand ſecret of this moſt deteſtable enthuſiaſm (and indeed the caſe is the ſame with every other ſpecies of it) was the art of ſetting up Chriſt againſt

his

his own laws, and ſuperſeding external ordinances by fanciful internal revelations. The truth is, a ſpirit of ſchiſm and a ſpirit of faction meeting in the ſame hearts, formed at this period of time a ſet of the moſt accompliſhed rebels againſt the kingdom and prieſthood of Jeſus Chriſt, as delegated to his repreſentatives in church and ſtate. But the battery raiſed for the demolition of both was maſked with ſuch an hypocriſy as the world never ſaw before, nor it is to be hoped will ever ſee again. Under the words *liberty* and *reformation* lay concealed the mine which at length blew up the conſtitution from it's foundations. Mankind beheld with aſtoniſhment the parliamentary cannon pointed againſt the king, for the ſecurity of his perſon; the Chriſtian church overturned to introduce the reign of Jeſus; and the ſaints, as they blaſphemouſly ſtyled themſelves, inheriting the earth, inſtead of it's right owners, to ſhew their heavenly mindedneſs. Then the myſtery of iniquity ſtood unfolded, and the eyes of the unwary, who had

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at first followed Absalom in the simplicity of their hearts, were opened. But it was too late. They could only reflect (and teach their children to reflect in time) upon the truth of the wise man's aphorism, and the excellency of the advice grounded upon it. "The beginning of "strife is as when one letteth out water; "therefore leave off contention before it be "meddled with." They plainly discerned, that he who said, "let every soul be sub-"ject unto the higher powers," understood the nature of government, and knew upon what principles alone it could be supported; since the remedy of rebellion proved (as it always will) to be infinitely worse than the disease of mal-administration; and the little finger of a commonwealth was found to be heavier than the loins of monarchy; the nation (besides the destruction of the best of churches, and the unparalleled murder of the best of kings), having suffered more, beyond all comparison, in the space of twenty years, from the tyranny of the pretended patriots, than from the des-

potism

potiſm of all the princes who had ever worn the imperial crown of England. But as the infatuated ſelfwilledneſs of rebels diſpoſes them to ſuffer, ſo the juſtice of GOD generally ordains that they ſhall ſuffer more and worſe things from the uſurper whom they themſelves ſet up, than they ever could have done from their lawful ſovereign; and accordingly they who daſhed in pieces the gracious ſceptre of a *Stuart*, were ſcourged with the iron rod of a *Cromwell*. DISC. XV.

But this rod of the oppreſſor, when by it the Lord had viſited the tranſgreſſions of his people, was at length broken. The prayers of the faithful remnant prevailed; and he who created and preſerves the world for the ſake of his church; he who ſecured her in the ark, when the flood came, and watched over her in the families of the holy patriarchs; he who brought her forth out of Egypt, led her through the wilderneſs, ſettled her in the promiſed inheritance, and made her to be the glory of the

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whole earth; he who raiſed up Cyrus to deliver her from the power of Babylon; who turned the heart of Alexander in her favour; who went forth with Judas and his brethren to the battle againſt the armies of *Antiochus*; and bade the ſword of *Conſtantine* conquer under the banner of the *croſs*; the ſame Lord who is rich unto all that call upon him, becauſe his mercy endureth for ever, heard the groanings of the church of England under her captivity; and having ſent a ſpirit of diſſenſion and confuſion amongſt the builders of the ſchiſmatical and republican Babel, he opened the eyes of the people to ſee that there was only one way of putting a period to the miſeries of their country; and at a time when it was leaſt hoped for, and by an inſtrument leaſt ſuſpected, he bowed the hearts of the whole nation as the heart of one man, "ſo that they ſent this word "unto the king, Return thou, and all thy "ſervants." So the king returned, and the church was delivered out of the hands of her enemies. Therein we do rejoice, yea,

and

and will rejoice. Nor ſhall the voice of praiſe grow cold in our mouths, though an hundred years are now elapſed ſince the day when this mercy was vouchſafed unto us; but ſeeing that thereby we have once more beheld Sion in her beauty, we will give thanks unto our Lord GOD, as if the king had this morning made his triumphant entry amidſt the acclamations of his exulting ſubjects, "impatient" (as the noble hiſtorian expreſſes it) "to fill their eyes with "a beloved ſpectacle, of which they had "been ſo long deprived." DISC. XV.

The reſult of the whole is this. If the Lord loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob, ſo ſhould we. If, in the revolutions of ſtates and empires, his eyes are upon the church, ours ſhould be there too, according to the example ſet us by the faithful of old time; who, being led into captivity, "wept when they re-"membered Sion;" being redeemed therefrom, "were glad when" their brethren "ſaid "unto them, Let us go into the houſe of

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"the Lord." If GOD's dealings with a people are regulated by their dealings with his church, then the ſtate of the church is always the beſt criterion whereby to judge of the true ſtate of the nation where ſhe is planted; and there are no greater enemies to their country, than thoſe who endeavour to alienate the minds of kings from her; ſince he who cannot lie hath ſaid concerning her, "No weapon that is formed "againſt thee ſhall proſper, and every "tongue that ſhall riſe againſt thee in judg- "ment thou ſhalt condemn. This is the "heritage of the ſervants of the Lord. "Thoſe that honour me, I will honour; "and ſuch as deſpiſe me ſhall be lightly "eſteemed. Let them all be confounded "and turned back, that hate Sion." For her proſperity, therefore, we and all the world ought to pray, as the pſalmiſt moſt earneſtly intreateth every one of us to do. —"O pray for the peace of Jeruſalem," becauſe, "they ſhall proſper that love "thee." *Peace*, then, O thou city of GOD, the peace of union and charity, "be within "thy

"thy walls, and plenteouſneſs" of grace and glory "within thy palaces." And while we thus pray for the church with our lips, let it be our unfeigned endeavour to adorn her by our lives. So ſhall we make the proper return for the mercies we have received; ſo ſhall we draw down more and more of the divine favour continually upon our king, and our country, the univerſity, and ourſelves; ſo ſhall we convince the world of this great and important truth, that the Chriſtian is the loyal ſubject, and the churchman the true patriot.

DISCOURSE XVI.

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.

JOHN VIII. 7.

He that is without ſin among you, let him firſt caſt a ſtone at her.

A WRITER of great note in the philoſophical and medical world tells us, that he never ſaw a criminal dragged to execution, without aſking himſelf, "Who "knows whether this man is not leſs "blameable than I am?" A queſtion which we ſhould all of us do well to aſk ourſelves, when we hear of, or ſee any perſon brought to ſhame and puniſhment, for ſin. The ſufferings

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ſufferings of others might thus turn greatly to our advantage, by humbling and leading us likewiſe to repent of our tranſgreſſions, which, perhaps, equally deſerve the rod, and eſcape only by not being known. On the contrary, the falls of our brethren too often produce no other effect in us, than pride and uncharitableneſs. We are pleaſed to think it is not ſo bad with us, and criticiſe without mercy upon characters which, take them for all in all, are perhaps not worſe than our own. What the behaviour of people generally is upon ſuch an occaſion, and what it ſhould be, we are ſhewn in the chapter of which the text is a part, where we read of a perſon taken in a grievous offence, and brought by the Scribes and Phariſees to Chriſt. I ſhall therefore go over this whole hiſtory, and make ſome ſuitable remarks on each part of it.

As our Lord was teaching in the temple, "the Scribes and Phariſees brought unto "him a woman taken in adultery; and "when they had ſet her in the midſt, they

"ſay

" ſay unto him, Maſter, this woman was DISC.
" taken in adultery, in the very act." XVI.

There is in human nature (however we are to account for it) a great curioſity to diſcover, and an equal deſire to publiſh the faults and infirmities of others. Some ſpend half their time in enquiring and liſtening after all that is ſtirring in this way. Not a breath of wind but ſtrikes their ear, if it be loaded with ſcandal. And then, when once they have heard a ſtory, which demoliſhes a reputation, how eager they are to make it known to their acquaintance! Tidings like theſe are frequently uttered with as much joy and triumph, as if the event were the beſt that ever befel the utterers in their lives. But how is this? Are they the better for their neighbour's crimes; or can they really take a pleaſure in the thought, that a fellow creature, and one of the ſame religion, has been ſeduced to offend God, and is in danger, without his grace, of periſhing eternally? Does this delight their hearts, and make their eyes ſparkle?

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ſparkle? Evil ſpirits rejoice at the fall and deſtruction of mankind; but angels mourn, and ſo ſhould we. Let them ſuppoſe their own relations or themſelves in the ſame ſituation, and then ſee how their behaviour appears; and let them learn, that ſin, which pierced the heart of their Saviour upon the croſs, can afford no matter of joy and triumph to any of his diſciples. Let them be as diligent in ſearching after their own ſins, to confeſs and amend them, as they have been in ſearching out thoſe of their neighbours, to publiſh and expoſe them. They will find work enough, and work that will reward their labour.

"This woman" (ſay the Scribes and Phariſees) "was taken in adultery" a foul and deadly tranſgreſſion, but not the only one in the world. When we ſee the woman "ſtanding in the midſt," put to open ſhame, and hear theſe men accuſing her, what holy and good men are we led to think them? What haters of ſin? How zealous for God and religion? They, to be

be ſure, are quite pure and meek, and pious, and charitable. Alas! how miſtaken ſhould we be, if we thus judged of them! Some pains, doubtleſs, have been employed to white-waſh the ſepulchres, and the outſides of them make a very creditable appearance. But let us only approach, and uncover them, and we ſhall ſoon be taught, that it is not always ſafe to *judge according to appearance.* For this wretched criminal is brought forth, not for the puniſhment of ſin, and the glorification of God, — but merely to lay a trap for Chriſt, that he might be accuſed, perſecuted, and put to death.—

"Moſes in the law commanded us, that "ſuch ſhould be ſtoned. But what ſayeſt "thou?" The deſign was, to ſet Moſes and Chriſt at variance, and they thought they had laid their ſnare in ſuch a manner that Chriſt muſt fall into it, either way. For if he contradicted Moſes, by ordering the woman to be releaſed, they would have ſet him down for a falſe prophet; and if,

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if, with Moſes, he ſentenced her to death, he muſt have acted contrary to his character of a merciful Saviour. So you ſee, theſe Scribes and Phariſees, while they were clamouring for vengeance againſt adultery, forgot there were any ſuch ſins as envy, hatred, and malice, and perceived not that they themſelves were all the time in the gall of bitterneſs. The woman had broken one commandment; but theſe her accuſers were overturning the foundations of the whole law, mercy, juſtice, and truth. So eaſy is it for men who are not upon their guard, even while they are exerting themſelves againſt ſome kinds of ſins, to run into others; nor indeed can we be greatly ſurpriſed, that they, who give up their whole attention to the concerns of their neighbours, ſhould ſometimes a little neglect their own.

The ſight of a ſinner diſcovered and brought to ſhame, might be a very uſeful and improving ſight to thoſe who behold it. But men have ſeveral ways of making

ing it to themſelves an occaſion of falling. DISC. XVI.

Some think it a proper ſubject of laughter, and Solomon tells us who they are — not remarkable for their *wiſdom*— "Fools," ſays he, "make a mock at ſin." For what is there in ſin to make a mock at? It is thought a very ſerious matter in heaven, and will be found ſo in hell. Why then ſhould it be made a jeſt of upon earth? It ruined mankind, and brought death into the world. And is there any thing humorous in that conſideration? As little merriment can there be in the nature of confeſſion and repentance, whereby the ſinner is delivered from the wrath to come. In the primitive ages ſuch a ſubject was never touched upon without concern and grief. But now, people have much ado to keep their countenances, and forbear laughing. So ſtrangely are the times altered; in other words, ignorance has taken place of knowlege, and folly ſits in the throne of wiſdom.

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Others there are, who, when they hear of a ſinner diſcovered and expoſed, bleſs themſelves to think, how good and righteous they are; ready to cry out, with the Phariſee, "God, I thank thee that I am "not as other men are." May be not, though we have only your own word for it, which many, perhaps, will not take. You are not indeed brought to ſhame or puniſhment; but, have you never deſerved to be ſo? Recollect a little. If not, have you ever been in the ſame circumſtances of temptation? or, are you ſure, that, in thoſe circumſtances, you ſhould not have fallen? Who is it that hath preſerved you all this time? Give the glory to God, and learn to have pity, like him, on thoſe, whoſe ſtrength failed in the day of trial. Otherwiſe, under the ſhew of great zeal for virtue and religion, you may diſplay as much pride, uncharitableneſs, and hypocriſy, as the Scribes and Phariſees did of old, when they brought the woman before our Saviour, only that they might enſnare him.

But

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But let us not be deceived as they were. God is not mocked. He knew their craft, and ſaw through their deſign. Their hearts were open to him, and he viewed diſtinctly all that was paſſing there. It was not his intention to deſtroy the law of Moſes, for he came to fulfil it; nor would he condemn ſinners, for he came to ſave them. At the ſame time, he would teach theſe men, that there were ſins known to God, which the law did not reach to puniſh here, and that thoſe ought to be avoided as well as theſe; ſince there was nothing ſecret which would not be known at the laſt day: that people who were fond of accuſing and puniſhing others, or of ſeeing them accuſed and puniſhed, ſhould therefore look at home, and examine how matters ſtood in their own breaſts, how they ſhould like to have the ſtory of their lives told aloud, and the thoughts of their hearts revealed to the world. This would ſoon cure that deſire, with which ſo many are infected, of knowing and publiſhing the faults of their neighbours; it would make

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them treat their weak and fallen brethren, as they themſelves would wiſh to be treated by the Judge of all the earth.

Such being our Saviour's intention, he ſeemed at firſt to take no notice of what was ſaid, but ſtooping down, he wrote with his finger on the ground. They now thought they had perplexed him, and that he knew not how to anſwer their queſtion. They preſſed him therefore more earneſtly, and continued aſking, till at length he raiſed himſelf, and thus addreſſed them—"He "that is without ſin among you, let him "firſt caſt a ſtone at her."

As if he had ſaid, in other words—"You have brought before me a perſon "taken in a grievous crime, and you tell "me, Moſes in the law commanded, that "ſuch ſhould be ſtoned. If he did com-"mand this, why do you come to me? "Truly for no reaſon, but to tempt "and enſnare me. You would appear to "be good and holy men, haters of ſin,

"zealous

" zealous for the honour of God and his " law. But your deſign all the while is to " entrap, to perſecute, and ſlay me, an in- " nocent perſon, ſent from God to be your " prophet, your prieſt, and your king, the " promiſed Meſſias, the Saviour of Iſrael. " The woman, it is true, is a ſinner; but " her accuſers are no ſaints, and the world " is impoſed upon, when it takes them for " ſuch. I know the rottenneſs of your " hearts, and can, when I will, ſhew it to " others. I ſhall not condemn the woman " myſelf, for it is not mine office. You " may do it, if you will affirm yourſelves " to be thoſe righteous men which you de- " ſire to be accounted. But this you dare " not do before me, a perſon who, as you " well know, can prove the contrary, and " give the by-ſtanders ſuch a hiſtory of " what you have been, and what you are, " as will make you aſhamed to ſhew your " faces. And therefore it is, that I chal- " lenge and defy you to proceed—He that is " without ſin among you, let him firſt caſt " a ſtone at her." This ſaid, Chriſt returned

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to his former employment of writing upon the ground, leaving the medicine, which he had adminiſtered, to perform it's operation.

And now behold the mighty force of a few words—"They which heard it, being "convicted by their own conſcience, went "out one by one, beginning at the eldeſt "even unto the leaſt; and Jeſus was left "alone, and the woman ſtanding in the "midſt." What? Are theſe godly perſons gone? all gone? and is the work, upon which they came, left unfiniſhed? It is even ſo. The criminal alone remains to be ſeen; her accuſers are fled. And reaſon good. They found there was one ready to accuſe them in their turn: they perceived that "all things were naked and open before "him with whom they had to do;" and they had no mind to have him lay open their hearts, and read a lecture upon them before the people. Their conſciences told them what ſort of a lecture that muſt needs be; and therefore, rather than provoke him to

read

read it, they very prudently made the beſt of their way out of the temple, and left him to condemn or abſolve the woman, as he ſhould think fit. DISC. XVI.

Whenever, therefore, you find yourſelves tempted to be ſevere upon a neighbour's failings, call to mind what paſſed between our Lord and the Phariſees. Buſy in bringing to light the ſins of another, they had entirely forgotten their own; they reflected not, how very unfit they were to be the woman's accuſers; they thought not what would become of themſelves, when God ſhould ariſe to judgment. And here is the great misfortune. Heaven has given to every man his portion of work, and every man is doing the work of his brother, inſtead of that which belongeth to himſelf. We are all naturally diſpoſed to entertain a pretty good opinion of ourſelves. A careful and conſtant examination of our ways might chance to ſpoil that good opinion, and is, for that reaſon, a taſk which we are very backward in entering upon. But

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we feel no ſuch pain in examining the ways of our neighbour, and finding him faulty; on the contrary, we are too apt to take pleaſure in a compariſon, ſure to be made to our own advantage. But then we are all the while deceived in imagining that our ſins are and will be unknown, becauſe we are able, for the preſent, to hide them from the world about us. The Phariſees, accuſing the woman in the temple, thought they ſtood quite ſecure in the characters which, by a little outward decency, they had acquired, of virtuous and holy men; when, lo, on a ſudden, they perceived one preſent, who was privy to all they had been ſecretly doing and thinking; one who was able to draw their true characters at full length, whenever he pleaſed, and thereby expoſe them to mankind, as a ſet of hypocrites.

And can we be regardleſs (for ignorant we cannot be) of the preſence of the ſame divine perſon amongſt us? To him all hearts are open, all deſires known; he knoweth our down-ſitting, and our up-riſing, and under-

ſtandeth

ſtandeth our thoughts long before; he is about our path, and about our bed, and ſpieth out all our ways. From him bolts and bars cannot ſecure us, darkneſs cannot hide our doings; for the darkneſs is no darkneſs with him; the night as clear as the day. Before him lies the regiſter of our lives, in which is noted every thing we have done, every thing we have ſaid, and every thing we have imagined. Should he again appear in the *Temple*, and from theſe eternal records "reprove us, and ſet" our ſecret ſins "in order before us," who could abide it, or ſtay to hear the accuſation out? He might once more be *left alone*. DISC. XVI.

Nor let us forget, that, although our God walketh not upon earth to teach and to reprove, as formerly he did in the fleſh, yet hath he placed in every breaſt a repreſentative of himſelf, to ſit in judgment, to condemn, or to abſolve. *Conſcience* is always preſent, ſtanding by, and taking an account of our proceedings, when we think not of it. Great endeavours are uſed to buy

off

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off and to ſilence this witneſs. Half the pleaſures and amuſements of the world are invented and followed, only to drug it, and lay it aſleep. And, for a time, they ſeem to have the deſired effect. Old ſins appear to be gone and forgotten. While health and proſperity laſt, the man goes on ſmoothly, ſaying to himſelf with Agag, "Surely the bitterneſs of death is paſt;" till at length, the lion is rouſed, and let looſe upon him, the miniſter of vengeance ſeizeth him, and "heweth him in pieces," when the word is given from above. Such a word was that of Chriſt to the Phariſees, which could not have affected them, if conſcience had not heard and underſtood it. Awaked by the ſound, it ſtarted from it's ſlumbers, and, as the officer of juſtice, apprehended them, when they leaſt expected it. Self accuſed, ſelf convicted, ſelf condemned, they gave all up, and diſappeared. Great indeed is the power of conſcience, when once it is ſet to work by him who planted it in the boſom of man. Nothing can withſtand it. From the moment it is alarmed,

alarmed, and begins to ſhew a man to himſelf, it will find him ſo much employment, that he will have little leiſure and leſs inclination to turn accuſer of his brethren, or to dwell upon and aggravate their offences. Go into the chamber of him whom ſickneſs and ſorrow have brought to a ſenſe of his ſins. See with what humility he confeſſes them, with what earneſtneſs he ſupplicates for pardon; how entirely taken up he is in ſettling the affairs of his own ſoul, and making his peace with God. Tell him that ſuch a neighbour hath fallen into a grievous ſin, he will lament, pity, and pray for him. Try to *entertain* and *divert* him upon ſuch a ſubject, he will think you a wretch not fit to be converſed with, and order you from his preſence.—To go one ſtep farther. Suppoſe the laſt day to be now come. Imagine you ſee the Judge upon his throne, the generations of mankind aſſembled before him, and the books opened, out of which we are all to be judged. Who, in that ſituation, would have any appetite to revile, inſult,

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inſult, or laugh at the tranſgreſſions of the man that ſtood next him? Whoſe thoughts would not be employed upon his own caſe? Who would not be anxious to obtain his own pardon, and leave God to deal as he thought fit with others, hoping and praying that he would be merciful to them likewiſe? To this temper death and judgment will certainly bring us all; and we muſt blame ourſelves, if in this temper they do not find us.

Having thus diſpatched the Phariſees, the woman alone remains. She was detained in the temple by the ſame principle, which cauſed the others to depart—conſciouſneſs of guilt. This kept her fixed, after her accuſers were gone; not daring to ſtir, till ſhe heard ſentence pronounced by Chriſt, before whom ſhe ſtood. At length, "Woman," ſaid he to her, raiſing himſelf from the ground, on which he had been writing, "where are thoſe thine accuſers? Hath "no man condemned thee? She ſaid, No "man, Lord. And Jeſus ſaid unto her, "Neither

"Neither do I condemn thee; go, and ſin "no more." We are not to think by this, that our Lord meant to excuſe guilt, to be the patron of ſin, or to find fault with the law of Moſes, which was the law of God. By that law, adultery was to be puniſhed with death. But the ſentence could not be paſſed without accuſers and witneſſes, who were all fled. Proper magiſtrates muſt paſs it, and had they done ſo, Chriſt had not interpoſed to hinder the execution of juſtice. But they having not condemned her, whoſe proper office it was, no more would Chriſt, whoſe office it was not, as he told the brethren who came to him about the diviſion of an inheritance, "Man, who made "me a judge and a divider?" He was no temporal magiſtrate, but came into the world in a very different quality, that of a ſpiritual Saviour. With reſpect to the Law, he left every thing as it was; he neither condemned, nor abſolved the woman. But as the publiſher of the Goſpel, and the author of ſalvation, he directed her how to obtain the pardon of Heaven, and eternal life, viz. by ſo truly repenting of her ſin, DISC. XVI.

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as never to return to it again—"Go, and "ſin no more." Deſpair not, therefore, O thou, whoſoever thou art, whom temptation hath drawn into ſin: thou art in the hands of one, who deſireth not the death of a ſinner; of one who died for thy ſake, to procure thee forgiveneſs, grace, and glory. Return to him, pray to him, love him, and ſerve him, all the remaining days of thy life. Let the remembrance of what is paſt teach thee, how bitter are the fruits of ſin; fear, ſorrow, ſhame, and confuſion; and henceforth learn by experience (for nothing elſe can truly inform thee) how ſweet are the fruits of righteouſneſs; peace and hope, and joy, and holy confidence. So ſhall thy brethren receive thee, as one alive from the dead, and rejoice, becauſe the ſheep, that went aſtray, and was loſt, is now found again. Nay, what is infinitely more, angels themſelves will take up their golden harps, and join in celebrating that mercy which hath effected thy converſion. "There is joy in heaven, among the "angels of God, over one ſinner that re-"penteth."

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ON THE PURIFICATION.

LUKE II. 22.

And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moſes, were accompliſhed, they brought him to Jeruſalem, to preſent him to the Lord.

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AMONG the many advantages we enjoy in theſe ſeats of learning and religion, it may ſurely be deemed one, that an honourable reſpect is paid to thoſe ſacred feſtivals, which the church of England, in her wiſdom, has thought proper to retain. They are few, and they are important: ſo few, that the neceſſary proſecution of ſecular buſineſs is not too much broken

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broken in upon; ſo important, that nothing ſeems to have been appointed in vain. They compoſe a celeſtial circle, of which Chriſt is the centre: his firſt and faithful friends form the circumference, reflecting back on him the glory received from him. They viſit us in their annual courſe, with meſſages from above, each teaching us ſomething to believe, and, in conſequence, ſomething to do. They bring repeatedly to our remembrance truths, which we are apt to forget: they ſecure to us little intervals of reſt from worldly cares, that our hearts with our hands may be lifted up to God in the heavens: they revive our zeal and fervour in performing the offices of religion: they cheer the heart with ſentiments of gratitude and thankfulneſs: they confirm us in habits of obedience to the inſtitutions of the church and the injunctions of our ſuperiors: they ſtir us up to an imitation of thoſe who have gone before us in the way of holineſs: they miniſter an occaſion to our children, of enquiring into the meaning of their inſtitution; and afford

afford us an opportunity of explaining the several doctrines and duties of Chriſtianity, to which they refer: in ſhort, to uſe the words of the excellent Hooker, "they are "the ſplendor and outward dignity of our "religion, forcible witneſſes of ancient "truth, provocations to the exerciſes of "all piety, ſhadows of our endleſs felicity "in heaven, on earth everlaſting records "and memorials; wherein they who can-"not be drawn to hearken unto that we "teach, may, only by looking upon that "we do, in a manner read whatever we "believe. Well to celebrate theſe religious "and ſacred days, is to ſpend the flower of "our time happily [a]."

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Let us therefore arreſt the feſtival of the day, and detain it, while we learn from it thoſe uſeful leſſons it is prepared to teach, concerning the purification of the bleſſed virgin; the preſentation of the child Jeſus in the temple; the ſacrifice offered upon

[a] Eccleſiaſtical Polity, v. 71.

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the occaſion; and the behaviour of Simeon and Anna.

If we look into the law of Moſes, we find it ordained, that the woman who had borne a male child, for forty days thence enſuing (a period, for whatever reaſon, often fixed on, in caſes of humiliation), was to be accounted impure, to touch no hallowed thing, nor to approach the ſanctuary. At the expiration of that term, ſhe was to repair, for the firſt time, to the temple, and there to have an atonement made for her by the prieſt.

With reſpect to the whole claſs of thoſe incidents and maladies to which the body is ſubject, thus regarded in the eye of the divine law as unclean; from the nature of the ordinance itſelf, as well as from numberleſs paſſages in the writings of the prophets, and more eſpecially in the New Teſtament, it ſhould ſeem evident, that ſomething farther was intended than may at firſt ſight appear. "The law ſtood," among

among other things, "in divers outward "washings and cleansings." But may it not be here asked, as in another instance, "Doth God take care for these? Or saith "he it not for our sake?" Hath he not enjoined such external rites, for the sake of conveying by them to future ages and generations, no less than to those then present, some truths of universal use and importance? DISC. XVII.

Of one thing we are all well assured. That alone which renders man and the creation otherwise than acceptable in the sight of their Maker, is sin. That alone which can reinstate them in his favour, is the redemption by Christ. By means of the former we are affirmed to have become "corrupted, polluted, defiled, unclean;" by the instrumentality of the latter we are said to be "purged, purified, washed, cleansed" — terms all borrowed from the legal ceremonies, at once explaining them, and being explained by them.

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Could the ſhadow of a doubt remain upon this head, it muſt be diſperſed by that full, direct, expreſs declaration, which the apoſtle has made, in the ix^th^ chapter of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews; perſons, who, if their education had been what it ought to have been, would have known theſe things, and not needed that any man ſhould teach them.

"The firſt tabernacle was a figure for "the time then preſent, in which were of- "fered both gifts and ſacrifices, that could "not make him that did the ſervice per- "fect, as pertaining to the conſcience; "which ſtood only in meats, and drinks, "and divers waſhings, and carnal ordi- "nances, impoſed on them till the time of "reformation. But Chriſt being come, an "high prieſt of good things to come, by a "greater and more perfect tabernacle, not "made with hands, that is to ſay, not of "this building; neither by the blood of "goats and calves, but by his own blood, "he entered in once into the holy place, "having

" having obtained eternal redemption for
" us. For if the blood of bulls, and of
" goats, and the aſhes of an heifer ſprin-
" kling the unclean, ſanctifieth to the puri-
" fying of the fleſh; how much more ſhall
" the blood of Chriſt, who, through the
" eternal Spirit, offered himſelf without
" ſpot to God, purge your conſcience from
" dead works, to ſerve the living God?
" Almoſt all things are by the law purged
" with blood, and without ſhedding of blood
" there is no remiſſion. It was therefore
" neceſſary that the patterns of things in
" the heavens ſhould be purified with
" theſe; but the heavenly things themſelves
" with better ſacrifices than theſe. For
" Chriſt is not entered into the holy places
" made with hands, which are the figures
" of the true; but into heaven itſelf, now
" to appear in the preſence of God for us."

It ſeems impoſſible, that, by any para-phraſe, or commentary, theſe words can be rendered plainer than they are in them-ſelves.

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To apply, therefore, this general reaſoning of the Apoſtle to the ceremony of the day, the purification of women after childbirth, under the law; if it be aſked, what ſuch ceremony was intended to import? can a better anſwer be given to the queſtion, than that which is given by the ſtandard writer on the feſtivals of our church?

"It imports, that, ſince Adam's fall, "we are conceived in ſin; that our birth "is impure; that we derive from our pa- "rents an hereditary ſtain, whereby we are "naturally unclean, and children of wrath; "and to ſhew the contagion thereof, not "only the child was circumciſed, but the "mother alſo was cleanſed by a ſacrifice "for ſin."

But here, the difficulty may be thought rather increaſed, than diminiſhed; ſince nothing of this kind could hold good reſpecting the bleſſed virgin, and "that holy "thing which was born of her," and juſtly called,

called, "The Son of God." The morning of his birth was indeed "a morning without clouds." No ſpot then ſullied the face of heaven. Why, therefore, muſt ſuch a mother, and ſuch a ſon, pay obedience to the law? The ſon paid obedience, as when he ſubmitted to be circumciſed, and to be baptiſed, not that he had any ſin to be put off, or waſhed away, but becauſe, being "made of a woman, and "made under the law," it became him to obey the law, or, as he expreſſed it to John, who propoſed the queſtion at his baptiſm, "to fulfil all righteouſneſs." In himſelf he was not a ſinner; but in our ſtead, he was content to appear as ſuch. The holy virgin placed herſelf, upon this occaſion, on a level with other women, when ſhe was ſo much above them, to exhibit a pattern of humility and obedience, of gratitude and devotion, of regard and reverence for the ordinances of God, which no one is privileged to neglect or ſlight, but which all ſhould attend, however they may fancy themſelves not to need, or not

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to be benefited by them. Indeed, who can have the confidence and presumption to absent themselves from the temple, when they behold Mary there, whom all generations have agreed to call Blessed! Let mothers, when, in the day of thanksgiving, they approach the altar, set before them her bright example; and let us remember, that by her becoming a mother, we are become the heirs of everlasting salvation; joint heirs with him who was, as at this time, presented in the temple.

"When the days of her purification "were accomplished, they brought him to "Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; "as it is written in the law of the Lord; "Every male that openeth the womb, "shall be called holy to the Lord."

Great were the privileges from the beginning annexed to the first-born. Theirs was the pre-eminence in power and wealth; and before the designation of the sons of Levi to the service of the altar, among the people

people of God, theirs was the prieſthood also. After that event, they ſtill continued, as before, heirs of a double honour and inheritance; they were ſtill offered in form to God, though redeemed, at a certain price, from actual attendance in the ſanctuary. Agreeably to this injunction, Jeſus was brought by his mother at the proper time, and preſented in the temple, as her firſt-born. He filled up the character, and highly exalted it. Beſides being her firſt-born ſon, he was likewiſe πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως, the firſt begotten, or firſt born of the whole creation, not only becauſe he εστι, *is*, προ παντων, before all things, and all things, both in heaven and earth, were created by him, but alſo becauſe he was begotten to inherit all things, and in all things to have the pre-eminence, ſince all things were created εις αυτον, *for* him, as well as δι' αυτου, *by* him[b]; in which view he is ſtyled abſolutely, τον πρωτοτοκον, THE Firſt-born[c], uniting in himſelf all that was from the beginning prefigured by the rights and honours

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[b] Coloſſ. i. 15, &c. [c] Heb. i. 6.

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of primogeniture. He is ſtyled, moreover, πρωτοτοκος εκ των νεκρων, the *Firſt-born*, or *Firſt begotten from the dead*, in regard of his being the firſt that roſe from the dead, no more to die. And with alluſion to the peculiar appropriation of all the firſt born to God, the aſſembly of redeemed ſpirits is called, "the church of the firſt "born, written," or "enrolled, in heaven."

"The bleſſed virgin" (ſays Biſhop Taylor) "had received a greater favour than "ever was received by the daughters of "Adam; and knowing from whence, and "for whoſe glory ſhe had received it, ſhe "returns the holy Jeſus as a gift to God "again; for ſhe had nothing — the world "had nothing — ſo precious as himſelf, of "which to make an oblation. Never was "there before an act of adoration propor-"tionable to the honour and majeſty of "the great God. But now there was; "and it was made, at the preſentation of "the child Jeſus in the temple."

Let *us* not fail, by uſing them aright, to return

return to God all things we have received from him; and by a virtuous education dedicate our children to him who gave them, bringing them early to the temple, and preſenting them to the Lord. DISC. XVII.

Bear we likewiſe in mind, that he who was thus offered in the temple, afterwards offered, and ſtill continues to preſent himſelf, to appear in the preſence of God, for us. He it is, whoſe precious blood, whoſe infinite merits, whoſe prevailing ſatisfaction, the church in her prayers preſenteth daily to God; and through whom alone ourſelves and all our oblations are accepted in the heavenly places. Nay, at that hallowed hour when the euchariſt is conſecrated, Chriſt is, again, figuratively and ſacramentally, preſented in the temple on earth. For his ſake, the Father is then well pleaſed with us: he hears our prayers, forgives our ſins, heals our infirmities, and graciouſly accepts our ſacrifice of praiſe and thankſgiving. Think not, O man, who ſlighteſt and diſparageſt that holy ordinance,

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nance, that thou ſhouldeſt have received any pleaſure, hadſt thou ſtood by the bleſſed virgin, when ſhe preſented her ſon at Jeruſalem.

Jeſus, not ſprung from the tribe of Levi, but from that of Judah, was redeemed, at the ſame price with others, from attendance on the Moſaic ritual. He came to put a period to that diſpenſation; to eſtabliſh the religion of the Goſpel; to be inveſted with an everlaſting prieſthood, after the order of Melchiſedek; to be, himſelf, the prieſt and the ſacrifice, the temple and the altar.

The Chriſtian, once preſented to God in baptiſm, cannot obtain redemption from that ſervice. He ought not ever to deſire it. Such ſervice is the only perfect freedom; a freedom from the tyranny of turbulent paſſions, and imperious deſires, from the bondage of ſin, of death, and of hell. Happy the ſervants of the beſt of maſters, did they but know their own happineſs; did they

they not grow weary of being well, and change, only to repent of their folly in having done so! DISC. XVII.

The offering made by Mary was the offering of the poor, of those who were not of ability to bring a more costly sacrifice; "according to that which is said in the "law of the Lord; If she be not able to "bring a lamb, then she shall bring two "turtles, or two young pigeons[d]."

Our Lord thought proper to appear, while on earth, in the character of a poor man, that he might advance the poor to the riches of his kingdom, and in the mean time render their condition here supportable, at least, if not pleasant, when they reflected that their Saviour was once as poor as they. At his birth he was poor, destitute of common conveniences. In his life poor; "foxes had holes, and the birds of "the air had nests, but the son of man "had not where to lay his head." At his

[d] Lev. xii. 8.

death

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death poor; ſold by the traitor for a paltry ſum, ſtripped, crucified, and then buried at the expence of others. Let not him, therefore, who is of low degree, be troubled and caſt down; but let him rather rejoice, becauſe in his poor eſtate God hath had reſpect unto him. Let him take comfort in that he is made like to his Saviour, and endeavour daily to become more and more like him, by bearing his lot with patience, contentment, and reſignation.

The ſacrifices offered in old time for atonement and redemption tended to point out to the world this great and concerning truth, that offenders ſhould be ſaved from death, and that God would one day accept a perſon in their ſtead, who ſhould ſuffer what they deſerved, and beſtow upon them what they did not deſerve. As the perſon thus deſtined to take away the ſins of men was to be an innocent perſon, the moſt innocent creatures were generally choſen to repreſent him; among beaſts the Lamb, among birds the Dove — a bird not armed with

with beak or talons, and having no design or desire to injure it's fellows; noted for purity and fidelity, for meekness and mourning; sociable, and friendly, and delighting to be about the dwellings of men. Such, after the example set us by our Master, ought we in temper and disposition to be, and then to offer up "ourselves, our "souls and bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, "acceptable, through him, to God, which "is our reasonable service." DISC. XVII.

Among those in Jerusalem who expected the appearance of a Redeemer about the time when he did appear, was a man named Simeon: stricken in years, and feeble in body, he possessed a mind and a faith vigorous and active. Not like the Pharisees of that day, studious only to be thought "a just and devout man," he really was such; full of religion and the love of God, of an exact justice and sincere charity towards his neighbour; looking forward, while he lived upon earth, to the life of heaven, and desiring nothing more than that,

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that, before he died, he might ſee Him whom the Jews and all the world did look for, the promiſed Meſſiah, the conſolation of afflicted Iſrael. A devout Jew, who underſtood the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, waited for the firſt advent of Meſſiah in the weakneſs of mortal fleſh: the devout Chriſtian now waits for his ſecond advent in the majeſty of immortal glory.

Such being the character of Simeon, it had pleaſed God to reward his extraordinary faith and piety with a gracious promiſe, that the wiſh of his heart ſhould be granted; "that he ſhould not die, till he "had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt." So good is it to live in the fear of God, in the expectation of his Son, and under the guidance of his Spirit.

The hour was now come, that Jeſus ſhould be brought to the temple, whither Simeon reſorted, not out of curioſity, cuſtom, intereſt, or hypocriſy, motives which too often lead men thither, but by the immediate

mediate direction of ſuperior influence; "he "came by the Spirit into the temple. And "when the parents brought in the child "Jeſus, to do for him after the cuſtom of "the law," and the prieſt, as was uſual, embraced the preſented child, and bleſſed him; then the good old man, tranſported and overcome at the ſo much deſired ſight, could no longer contain himſelf; but taking the holy infant in his arms, he poured forth with that voice, which was ſoon to be heard no more, the moſt melodious ſtrains of gratitude and praiſe, bidding farewel to the world in the words of that hymn, which we are taught by our church to recite, on the evening of each day, and which to the good man, at the cloſe of life, will be ſweet indeed—"Lord, now letteſt thou "thy ſervant depart in peace, according to "thy word. For mine eyes have ſeen thy "ſalvation, which thou haſt prepared be-"fore the face of all people: a light to "lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy "people Iſrael." God had performed his promiſe, had ſhewn him the Meſſiah, had

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filled his heart with joy, and made his old age honourable. Simeon had now gazed upon the ſun, and thenceforth became blind to the beauties of this lower world. Earth had no charms for him. He deſired to depart. Thus will it be with the juſt and devout Chriſtian, whoſe heart is ſet upon the Lord's Chriſt, and the conſolation of Iſrael; who is led by the Spirit into the temple, there to find, to behold, and to embrace him, by faith, in his holy ordinances. If any diſpute the truth of what is ſaid, and be diſpoſed to aſk Nathanael's queſtion, "Can any good thing come out "of Galilee?"—the anſwer muſt be made in the words of Philip—COME, AND SEE.

Joſeph and Mary, whoſe underſtandings, we may ſuppoſe, were gradually opened to the wonders about to be unfolded and accompliſhed, "marvelled at thoſe things "which were ſpoken" by Simeon, who "bleſſed them, and," in the ardour of the prophetical ſpirit, "ſaid unto Mary, Be-"hold this child is ſet for the fall and "riſing

"riſing of many in Iſrael; and for a ſign "which ſhall be ſpoken againſt, that the "thoughts of many hearts may be reveal-"ed; yea, a ſword ſhall pierce through "thine own ſoul alſo." I recite theſe words laſt, that the ſenſe may appear clearer; as, in the place where they ſtand, they are evidently parenthetic. DISC. XVII.

This is a ſhort deſcription of what paſſed at the time, and has been paſſing in the world ever ſince. It is not, as many ſeem to imagine, a matter of indifference, when Chriſt is preached, whether he be received, or rejected. It is neceſſarily productive of great effects; the fall of ſome, to whom he becomes a ſtone of ſtumbling and offence; the riſing of others, who find in him a fortreſs and rock of ſalvation. Every one therefore ſhould moſt diligently from time to time examine the ſtate of his own mind, reſpecting the doctrines and the precepts of our Lord, whether he gives them a kind and hearty reception, or ſecretly ſlights, and contemns, and is aſhamed of

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them. For the Goſpel is a touchſtone, by which the grand trial is made of the ſpirits of men; the thoughts of whoſe hearts are ſoon revealed by their words and actions; ſince, where it comes, they cannot long refrain from diſcovering their ſentiments and inclinations, one way or other. Deep were to be the ſorrows occaſioned in the heart of her who bare the holy child, by the oppoſition raiſed againſt him, and the ſufferings ſuſtained by him. "A ſword ſhall pierce "through thine own ſoul alſo." The piercings of this ſword muſt now be felt by thoſe who love him, when he is again become "a ſign" by ſo many "ſpoken "againſt." But as it was with the ſufferings of his perſon, ſo will it be with thoſe of his name—"Weeping may endure for "a night; but joy cometh in the morn-"ing."

While this curious and intereſting ſcene was exhibited in the temple, "one Anna, "a propheteſs, a widow of about fourſcore "and four years, who ſerved God with "faſtings

"faſtings and prayers night and day, coming in at that inſtant, gave thanks likewiſe unto the Lord, and ſpake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jeruſalem."

On her ſtory we may obſerve, that a life regularly and uniformly conducted according to the diſcipline of religion, and the ordinances of the church, attracts the notice of heaven, and is thought worthy of being recorded by the Spirit of truth: that the returns of prayer and the bleſſings of piety, though not beſtowed, perhaps, at the ſeaſons when we fondly expect them, yet at the laſt they will come, and crown all our wiſhes, with a ſight of the Redeemer, and a participation of his joy: that we are always moſt likely to receive ſpiritual comforts, in the temple. There it was, that this devout perſon had for ſo many years poured forth her heart unto God; and there it was, that it pleaſed him to reward her, by cauſing her to come in, at the inſtant when Jeſus was to be ſeen there. In holy

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holy places the Holy One doth chiefly manifeſt himſelf: he goeth in the ſanctuary, and bleſſing goeth with him. The man who abſents himſelf from the houſe of God, may miſs the very ſermon that would have brought him to conſideration, to repentance, to faith, to pardon, and to peace; he may miſs an opportunity of finding his Saviour, which may not be offered to him again.

To conclude—We are taught, by this example of Anna, what returns we ſhould make to heaven for the knowlege of ſalvation communicated to us. We ſhould glorify God, and edify our neighbour. For ſhe firſt "gave thanks unto the Lord;" and then, "ſpake of Chriſt to all them "that looked for redemption in Jeruſa-"lem." Some ſuch there are at all times; and they ſhould converſe together, to improve and to comfort one another; hoping, at the end of their days, to behold the Lord's Chriſt, the conſolation of Iſrael, the light and the glory of the church univerſal,

in

in the true temple, in the heavenly Jeru- DISC. XVII.
ſalem; where, let us beſeech God, that
"as his bleſſed Son was preſented in the
"earthly temple, in the ſubſtance of our
"fleſh, ſo we all may be preſented unto
"him, with pure and clean hearts, by the
"ſame Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord;" to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed, as is moſt due, all bleſſing, and honour, might, majeſty, and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

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in the true temple, in the heavenly Jeru- DISC. XVII.
salem; where let us beseech God, that
"as his beloved Son was presented in the
"earthly temple, in the substance of our
"flesh, so we all may be presented unto
"him, with pure and clean hearts, by the
"same Jesus Christ, our Lord;" to whom,
with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be
ascribed, as is most due, all blessing, and
honour, might, majesty, and dominion, for
ever and ever. Amen.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.